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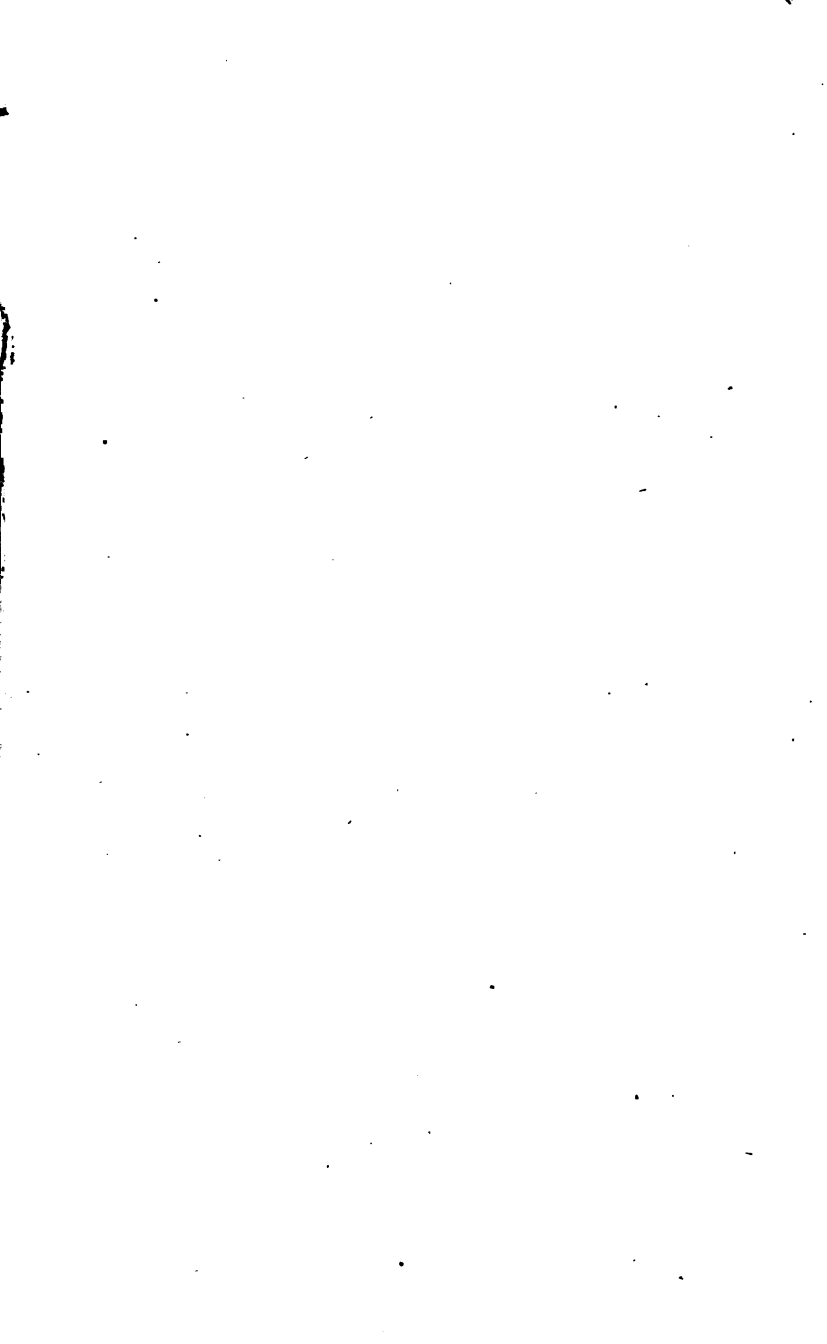
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LIFE-SCENES

FROM THE

FOUR GOSPELS,

BY

REV. GEO. JONES, A.M.,

CHAPLAIN U. S. NAVY.

New-York :

JNO. P. PRALL, No. 9 SPRUCE STREET.

1865.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by

GEORGE JONES,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of
New York.



56,228

Jno. P. PRALL,

Printer, 9 Spruce-St., N. Y.

*Letter introducing the Author ; by the late Prof.
B. Silliman, Sen., of Yale College.*

JANUARY 29th, 1864.

To ———

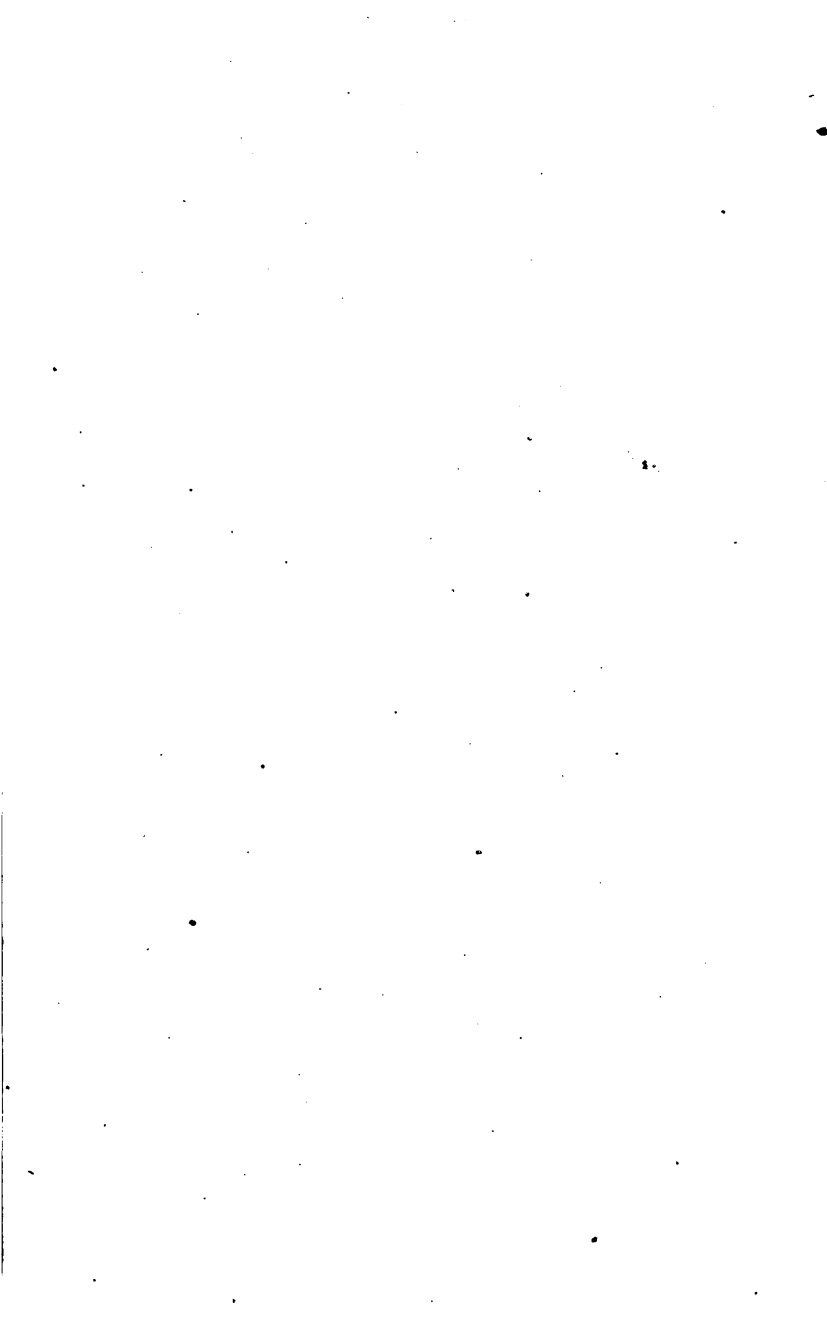
My Dear Sir,—Permit me to name to you and to ask your kind influence in favor of my excellent friend, REV. GEORGE JONES, a gentleman whose talents, literary acquirements, and catholic Christian zeal in doing good, entitle him to the confidence and esteem which he enjoys among a wide circle of friends.

He has added a new tribute to the literature of the Scriptures in an original effort to make vivid and life-like the scenes of the Saviour's life.

MR. JONES, as a chaplain in the Navy, has exerted a very happy influence upon the character of our seamen. He is well known among the literary and scientific circles of our country, and as a highly intelligent traveller in all quarters of the globe."

Yours very respectfully and truly,

B. SILLIMAN.



PRELIMINARY.

THE object in writing this book has been *to fill up* the scenes in the Gospels by means of the various knowledge now within our reach ; and to make them *more real and life-like* to the mind than they frequently appear in our unappreciative mode of reading. Those ancient times, and the habits of the people, were all so different from our own, that we need great help in order fully to understand the Gospel narratives ; but this help is often beyond the reach of individuals ; or, when afforded, is in the form of commentaries or critical works, and so disjointed as to have little attractiveness, and to make little permanent impression on the reader.

We need something more ; something that will gather from the most reliable books on archæology, criticism, topography, history, &c, the knowledge bearing on the incidents in the Gospels, and which will mingle all this with its scenes, in a manner to give them not only fullness, but, as far as possible, freshness to our minds. That has been attempted in this work ; and the nature of the subjects will attach a value to the effort, although it may fall short of fully accomplishing the purpose.

After the book had been written, the author felt

greatly encouraged by meeting the following passages from other writers, showing how much such an effort is needed.

From a Critique on Renan's "Life of Jesus," by a Professor in Theology.

"This life of Jesus, so fascinating to the lovers of romance, may also lead Christian thinkers to depict the living Christ more vividly in all his human endowments, relations, and sympathies. We are, perhaps, too apt to dwell upon him as the centre of doctrines; to substitute the abstract dogma for the living person. The success of Renan's book is, doubtless, in part, to be attributed to the graphic beauty with which he depicts the scenes in the midst of which the youth of our Lord was spent; to the air of living interest he throws around the personal narratives and the records of events; to his use of a prolific and cultivated imagination in making resurrection of the past, so that it often seems like a present reality. How much more perfectly, without inconsistencies and contradictions, might this be done by the reverent Christian scholar, imbibing the full spirit of the evangelists, and using all the resources of thought and scholarship to illustrate the wondrous story of Jesus of Nazareth! Let this but be written in a book, as it is inscribed on every loving and believing heart; let the radiant Person of our Lord appear in visible majesty and grace, and such poor fictions as that of Renan will quickly vanish, as do the phantoms of a rayless night before the brightness of a rising sun."

From the N. Y. "Christian Advocate and Journal" (Methodist) of June 1st, 1865.

"We have never met with a book in which the life of Christ has been adequately delineated from the modern point of view. . . . The materials for illustration are abundantly at hand, and we trust one day to see them graphically and vividly employed for that purpose. The book, if properly executed, would vie in interest with any romance; for the tragedy culminating at Calvary is without a parallel in all the elements of pathos and sublime incident."

From Canon Stanley's book on Sinai and Palestine.

"So to delineate the outward events of the Old and New Testament, as that they should come home with a new power to those who, by long familiarity, have almost ceased to regard them as historical truth at all—so to bring out their inward spirit that a more complete realization of their outward form should not degrade but exalt the faith of which they are the vehicle—this would indeed be an object worthy of all labor which travellers and theologians have ever bestowed on the East."

To meet such a requirement from the public is however a task of many difficulties: for while an author like Renan may add to his graphic scenes by allowing free rein to a discursive fancy, the Christian writer puts off his shoes, for the place on which he is standing is holy ground. He must still be reverent, in every effort to be graphic. But, on the other hand, he has an advantage in the elevation of feeling produced by the Divine Presence, in which he knows himself to be. And very pleasant it is to him, while following Christ in his lowest humiliations, in his mingling with publicans and sinners, and in the teachings adapted to the most abject in life, to watch the Divinity still shining out, and only made grander by the contrast with its surroundings. That grandeur of the God revealed would sometimes indeed be oppressive and overwhelming, if it were not in Christ: for in him it was so wondrously mingled with what is gentle and loving, that it never made him the less winning or less approachable.

Indeed the difficulty in following Jesus, in such records, is to feel that he is of the earth (though temporarily;) so constantly is he raising us towards heaven; and to recognize in him the human nature in all its

reality, to such a degree does the Divinity appear in him and engross our minds.

Therefore, in the course of time, people have come, in their feelings, to attach to him and his trials something of the mythical ; and they read his life, perhaps, without aiming to enter into the fulness of its actualities. The writer of this book has endeavored to give to his humiliations the force and vividness of the real, while, at the same time, recognizing the grandeur of the Divine.

His aids, in preparing this work, have been the following :

1. He has been in Palestine ;—his visit, a short one, but sufficient to assist his judgment respecting descriptions of those countries by others.

2. He has consulted a great variety of books ; chiefly :—

On Criticism : Rev. S. T. Bloomfield, "The Greek Testament, with English Notes, critical, philological, and exegetical ;" 2 vols. : H. S. Alford, "The Greek Testament, with a critically revised text, and a critical commentary," an excellent work ; F. A. Tholuck, F. A. D., "Commentary on the Gospel of St. John ; Olshausen, Dr. Adam Clarke, &c., &c.

On Archæological facts : Rev. Dr. Lightfoot, The whole works (9 vols.) edited by John Roger Pitman ; Jahn's *Archæology* ; Josephus, &c.

On Topography : Biblical Researches by E. A. Robinson and E. Smith, 3 vols. ; Rev. Geo. Williams, "The Holy City ;" Van de Velde, "Narrative of a Journey through Syria and Palestine ;" Thompson's "Land and the Book ;" E. D. Clarke's "Travels in

various countries of Europe, Asia and Africa;" *Olin, Durbin, Stanley, Pococke, Sandys, &c., &c.*

Also various other authors not easily classified, whose names will be found in the notes, as they are quoted.

3. The writer has also, in filling up these scenes, brought into use those moral and physical laws of our being, by which, certain circumstances being given, we may know that certain results in feeling or action will follow : but, in doing this, he has tried always to keep strictly to what might be known to be the actualities in the case, and never to allow fancy to make any exaggerations or distortions of the truth. He hopes he has succeeded in this, for no vividness of presentation can make amends for the want of truthfulness.

As respects *the order* of events, he has followed Robinson in his "Harmony of the Gospels." This order is nearly the same as in St. Mark's Gospel, as far as events are described by that writer, who, with St. John, was the most methodical of the Evangelists.

No efforts, unless by the direct influences of the Spirit, can ever bring back to our minds the *freshness* of the Gospel histories, which was lost when we were too young to understand fully their contents ; yet it is hoped that this book, by its delineations, "from the modern point of view," may help to give a newness to some of the scenes.

The reader has, perhaps, wondered, sometimes, what would be his sensations if the Scripture-truths were, now, first presented to him. The author of this book once witnessed a circumstance of that kind ; —a man of mature intellect, and apparently of open and candid mind, listening, for the first time in his life, to the Gospel of Christ. It was in the mission-

ary church in the centre of Shanghae, in China ; and the scene was a singularly interesting one. The missionary was preaching in the native language ; and this man, apparently about forty-five years of age, and with an open and intelligent countenance, was, presently, not able to keep his seat. He arose, and stood through the rest of the discourse, seemingly unconscious of everything but what he was listening to ; his hands grasping the back of the seat before him ; his features lighted up and showing deep attention ; and his eyes never once removed from the speaker's face ; a slight nod of the head frequently giving assent to what was said. After the services were over, he followed the missionary to his room ; mentioned that he came to the city on business from a distant town in the interior ; that a friend belonging to the same place had once heard the missionaries, and had told him of them ; and that he had come, on this occasion, to hear for himself.

That sight showed, in some slight degree, what may have been the scenes in Palestine when the crowds were following the Messiah, and listening to his preaching. It has been with the author constantly, while writing this book ;—that intent face, that rapt attention, those glistening eyes, that surprised and pleased look, and those nods of assent.

References for authority are carefully given throughout this work, so that the reader may judge for himself of the truthfulness of the scenes here sketched.

GEO. JONES.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

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LIFE-SCENES

FROM THE

FOUR GOSPELS.

CHAPTER I.

AT THE JORDAN.

THERE was a very strange scene at the banks of the Jordan. The time of which we are writing was about eighteen hundred and thirty-five years ago ; and the scene referred to was a large gathering of excited people around a man of singular appearance, who was making a wonderful announcement, and was engaging in a baptismal rite of very startling significance. He was a gaunt ascetic ; in his dress and manner, and in his authoritative language, reminding all who saw and heard him of the old prophets ; and, indeed, in his appearance so resembling Elijah, that the query was immediately started in every man's mind, whether he was not actually that prophet risen from the dead ? The idea of such a resurrection of Elijah was familiar to the minds of the Jews ; for the belief had long been universal among them, that, restored to life, he would be the precursor of the Messiah himself. This man was proclaiming, "*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" It was believed by the Jews, that,

at the appearing of the Messiah, they were to be initiated by baptism into the new dispensation of his kingdom;* and here now they were called to come and to be baptized; and numbers, after confessing their sins, were led down into the Jordan for that rite.

The scenery all around was in character with the strange performer in this ceremony;—a desert place, represented by a modern traveller to that region as a dreary waste, “weird, and singularly wild and impressive.” The Jordan is a very peculiar stream. After issuing from the Lake of Tiberias, which is itself 652 feet below the surface of the Mediterranean, its course is southwardly, in a valley called by the present natives El Ghor, or “the depression,” six or seven miles wide, and sunk from 1000 to 1200 feet below the adjacent country. Running lengthwise in the Ghor is a second valley, depressed below it to a depth of fifty feet, and with a width of 400 yards; and then, sunk again in this, and winding about in a most tortuous manner, is the channel of the river. The stream has an average width of fifty-six yards, with commonly a depth of from three to five feet. The current is usually rapid, for the distance between the Lake of Tiberias and the Dead Sea is, in a straight line, sixty miles, and the descent between them is 660 feet. Sometimes the stream presents cataracts, at others it expands and has a gentle flow. Where it is rapid, the bottom consists of rock or sand. The channel is fringed at its immediate sides with rushes or cane, and with willows and similar trees, which, in the utter barrenness around, are a pleasant relief to the eye. Such is the stream so

* Bloomfield on Matt. iii, 1.

often referred to in our hymnology, and so dear, by its associations, to every Christian heart. Its channel being so far below the level of the Ghor that its water never overflows into the latter ; this wide valley, having also no springs, is a scene of desolation, and appears to have been so in the earliest times.* The soil at the spot we have now under consideration is described by modern travellers as "unfertile, and in many places encrusted with salt, and having small heaps of white powder, like sulphur, scattered at short intervals over its surface."† The hills bounding the Ghor are generally abrupt and broken, and are always naked and painful to the eye. On the east they are soon succeeded by ranges 2000 or 2500 feet in height ; and, back of these, is finally the very lofty range of Mount Nebo, its summit forming a horizontal line smooth and unbroken, as if an immense wall had there been built up against the sky.

This will give us an idea of the wildness and desolateness of the spot called in the Scriptures "the Wilderness of Judea," where this strange man was now proclaiming his startling doctrines, and was administering baptism in the Jordan. His cry that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, quickly repeated throughout Judea, and all over the regions bordering on the river valley, sent a thrill through every Jewish heart, and met there a ready response ; for there had been an expectancy of this kind universally indulged by the Jews (a temporal kingdom however), and, indeed, not

* See Josephus *De bello*, iii, 10, § 7.

† Robinson's *Bib. Researches*. This description of the Ghor and Jordan is drawn from Robinson, Van de Velde, and the Dead Sea expedition.

confined to them alone. PERCREBUERAT, says Suetonius, ORIENTE TOTO, VETUS ET CONSTANS OPINIO ESSE IN FATIS, UT EO TEMPORE JUDEA PROPECTI RERUM POTIRENTUR: *There had been greatly multiplied through all the East an old and uninterrupted opinion, originating in the decree of the Fates, that, at this time, persons coming from Judea should obtain universal dominion.** Tacitus informs us that *the multitude [in Judea] relied upon an ancient prophecy, contained, as they believed, in books kept by the priests, in which it was foretold that, at this time, the power of the East would prevail over the nations, and a race of men should go forth from Judea to extend their dominion over all the rest of the world.†* Josephus says: *But now what did most elevate them [the Jews] in this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable world.‡*

These expectations, it is evident, had reference only to an earthly sovereignty; but as such they met even a heartier response among the Jews than any of a sublimer character could have done; for the nation was just beginning to feel the full terrors of the Roman power, which had enclosed them in its iron embrace, and from which they knew that there was no escape by human aid. Their independence may be said to have been fully bartered away for Roman favor by Herod the Great. Archelaus, the successor to part of his kingdom, was deposed by Augustus-Cæsar, and banished to Gaul; and Roman governors were appointed to Judea, the sceptre having clearly, to every percep-

* In Vespas.

† Hist. lib. v, 12.

‡ De Bello, vi, 5, §4.

tion, departed, and their country, now but a Roman province, from which successive rulers tried who could exact the most. Roman soldiers were scattered, in garrison, in various parts; tax-gatherers (publicans) were to be seen everywhere, and were constantly, to the eyes of the oppressed inhabitants, reminders of their subjection to foreign power, and were hated, not only for this, but for their unjust exactions; and most alarming of all, an act of their present governor, Pontius Pilate, had shown them how insecure were their religious observances, and how open they were to the violation of the most cherished feelings of their nation. Their law forbade their paying any homage to images; and the former governors, when ordering the Roman soldiers to Jerusalem, had directed them to come without the standards surmounted by the emperor's effigies, to which, when seen, honors were always required to be paid. Pilate, aware of this hostility to images, had recently directed his soldiers to be introduced into the city by night;* and morning disclosed the hated effigies in Jerusalem, and in the castle of Antonia attached to the N. W. corner of the temple itself. A horror seized upon all the people, and a deputation hastened with remonstrances to the governor at Cæsarea. He treated their act as an insult to the emperor, and had the deputies surrounded by his soldiers; but the effort to overawe them was futile; they fell to the ground and offered their necks to the sword, rather than yield; and, finally, the obnoxious emblems were withdrawn. Afterwards, when the governor, seizing on some of the revenues of the temple, employed them in bringing water to the city, the inhabitants shocked at such use of

* Jos. Antiq. xviii, 3, § 1.

the sacred treasures, rose in tumult ; a collision with the soldiers was the consequence, and great havoc among the unarmed multitudes ensued.

CHAPTER II.

AT THE JORDAN.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that just at this time the national heart was ready to be acted upon by such a scene as that at the Jordan, where the prophet-like man stood calling people to the cleansing of their hearts as a preparation for the new, significant rite connected with the coming of their expected great Deliverer ; and that multitudes flocked to him from regions far and near. He had selected a spot called Bethabara, or *the house of the ford*,* seemingly a thoroughfare, while also a place remote from such complications as might arise from crowded neighborhoods : and there, where all nature in its sternness harmonized with him, and with the severe simplicity of his call and his act, he was soon surrounded by crowds "from Jerusalem and all

* Van de Velde supposes Bethabara to have been at the present ford on the way from Nablous (Sychem) to Es Salt, about twenty miles above the Pilgrims' bathing place near Jericho. He bases this opinion on the time (two days and a half) allowed in John ii, 1, in going from the baptismal scene to Cana, in Galilee. The width of the Jordan at this spot is 56 yards ; the depth about four feet.

Judea and all the region round about Jordan." They saw a man with only a garment of rough camel's hair, such as was worn by the poorest, fastened by a leathern girdle ;—locusts and wild honey for his food. Locusts are still eaten in Syria, chiefly, however, by Bedouin on the extreme frontiers of the desert, where, after being semi-boiled and salted and dried, they are packed up and kept for use. They may be seen in the Syrian shops for sale, but are always considered as an inferior food, and are eaten only by persons of the poorest class.* This man had been brought up in the desert, and he still adhered to this abstemious food.

Baptism was not unknown to the Jews, for it is universally admitted to have been a rite in use among them for the admission of proselytes;† and it was practiced by the Persians and other oriental nations. Josephus informs us of the Essenes,—a noted sect in his nation,—that "when a proselyte hath given evidence during that time of trial [a year] that he can observe their continence, he approaches nearer to their way of living, and is made a partaker of the waters of purification."‡ But the Essenes were a sect few in number and living in retired places ; and these baptismal scenes at the Jordan had evidently a significance different from any thing which the nation had previously known. The prophet-like man gave them their significance, corresponding to the general belief of the dispensation to be inaugurated by the Messiah.

That desert was now solitary no more. Crowds were

* Thompson's Land and the Book.

† Bloomfield.

‡ Be Bello, li, 8, § 7.

flocking to it, for the cry of the Baptist that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, repeated over all the country, had startled the people out of the lethargy wrought by oppressions, or by a belief that God had withdrawn from them ;—for, during a period of 400 years, there had been no prophet in Israel.

John the Baptist looked as if he might well be Elijah himself ;—so like him in this hairy dress, in his manner, in his authoritative voice ; and yet he was speaking of himself humbly, saying that one was coming immeasurably greater than he.

What might the nation not expect ? . What hopes could be too extravagant to be indulged ? We must not think them insane in their expectation of an universal dominion ; for they believed that it had been promised by Jehovah, and almost every spot in their land bore testimony to God's powerful action in their behalf. Just below this place, where John was baptizing, He had divided the deep waters of the Jordan in its rapid flow, and had kept them divided till his people had passed over dry-shod ; there, Jericho had fallen simply by his almighty will ; their history was full of his direct interpositions for their advantage ;—what would he not do for them now, if the Messiah himself, the Prince were to appear ?

Those eastern people are excitable and demonstrative, and, in their common moods, seem often to strangers to be wildly emotional ; and we may imagine the scene, as people hurried to the river and gazed on John with an intensity of feeling that had never before been raised in them by any man ; and listened to his call to repentance and the reasons for it, and witnessed his baptisms ;—saw the penitents descend with the

sadness of grief in their face ; and saw them come up from the river, comforted and cheerful. Such feelings are contagious ; and every new-comer felt in himself the need of penitence, and longings for relief that could be bestowed only by a power not of earth.

The teachings of John were plain and simple. As a proof of penitence and of changed feelings in those applying to him, he inculcated benevolence and kind acts : "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat let him do likewise."

The crowd around him was a mixed one ;—men among them shunned by their neighbors, looked down upon with dislike by almost every one in the nation, and yet with human feelings, and with the same longings as others to shake off the load of guilt and to be comforted. Such were the publicans who presented themselves before the Baptist. We can almost see their hesitating manner, their subdued look, and their timid approach. They were not repelled. No harshness shown,—simply the injunction given, in order to prove the truth of their penitence : "Exact no more than is appointed you."

Soldiers also came, with that old question of the human heart wanting relief, "What shall we do ?" The Roman garrisons in Judea, were drawn partly from Italy, but were chiefly composed of Syrians from the north of Palestine, or of foreign wanderers who had strayed into Judea ; and generally there was no good will between them and the Jews. But there were exceptions, such as we see shortly after this in the case of Cornelius of the Italian band. The soldiers at the Jordan pressed on towards the Baptist ;—for the pow-

erful sympathies of the place had seized on them, and had changed their bold, fierce nature into one of humble inquiry. The crowds gazed earnestly, as they advanced. How would these men, famed for rapacity and violence, be received? Some looked on them with indignation at their presumption in intruding on such scenes; some with the cordiality begot by the new feelings at the baptism; all with deep interest as the Baptist addressed them. His words had a latent reproof, and yet were gentle. "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." The rite was open to all coming in penitence.

But there was suddenly a change in the character of this scene. A sensation was created among the multitudes by the approach of men of rank and power, who came on in the consciousness of their position,—Pharisees with high pretensions to sanctity which they carried ostentatiously in the large phylacteries on their foreheads and arms, and in the width of the borders to their garments drawing attention to their unusual observance of the Mosaic law (see Numbers xv, 37-41);—also Sadducees proud of their wealth and assumed superior intelligence. Both undisguisedly despised the ranks inferior to them. The multitudes drew back as this newly arrived party swept haughtily on; and presently they caught the eye of the Baptist.

What a change there was in him! How his eyes lighted up; how indignant the expressions of his face; how changed was his voice from its former gentleness! And his words were stunning. "O brood of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say unto yourselves, We have Abraham to our father:

for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees ; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water ; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire ; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The whole scene by the Jordan was becoming more and more confounding to people's apprehensions ; for, not only had the bold ascetic stigmatized these Jewish leaders in a manner that must excite their wrath, but he had even seemed to cast disrespect on all claims arising from Abrahamic descent. He had ended also with words of terrific import respecting approaching events, when all false pretensions would be scattered to the winds, and those who held them would be fearfully and eternally punished. Fear, awe, and a new sense of shrinking respect for the Baptist, crept through the hearts of the multitudes, while yet they continued to be attracted by his general mildness and forbearance, and his gentleness to the truly penitent coming forward for the baptismal rite.

The news of these scenes still continued to spread over the country, and crowds were still hurrying from all parts of it to that wild, dreary region, already filled with excited, wondering throngs.

But who was this man, whose fame was now filling the land ? People were asking the question every-

where, and the results of inquiry disclosed some very interesting facts.

His birth had been in the old age of his parents, and had been heralded by an angel. His father, a priest, while administering at the altar of incense in the temple, had seen the heavenly visitant, who announced the approaching birth of the child, and said that he should be great in the sight of the Lord, and should be filled with the Holy Ghost. "And," continued the angel, "many of the children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The father was struck dumb at the time on account of his unbelief, but recovered speech when the child, eight days after its birth, was brought to the temple, where, contrary to the expectations of relatives, he named his son John, according to the direction of the angel. These incidents were widely known at the time "throughout all the hill country of Judea, and produced dread as well as astonishment wherever known.* He was, according to the direction of the angel, to "drink neither wine nor strong drink;" and his training is believed to have been in that most desolate region called the "Wilderness of Judea," where probably he associated much with the Essenes, a singular people, living chiefly at the only verdant spot in that desert—the fountain of En-Gedi, on the bor-

* His birth is supposed by Robinson and Reland to have been at Juttah (Joshua xxi, 16). a town about five miles south of Hebron, and twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem.

ders of the Dead Sea. In this desert* he "grew strong in spirit," and was prepared for his present work of teaching and baptizing. He was now about thirty years old, the age at which the Jewish priests entered upon the temple duties according to their law.

Josephus says of him, that he "was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins only, but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.†

His exhortations were various;‡ but they all pointed clearly to the Messiah as now about to appear; he asked no honors for himself; they were all to be given to one yet to come. In his recent address to the Pharisees and Sadducees, he spoke of himself as immeasurably inferior to him whose appearance he was heralding; for to bear the shoes of a master in that country was the task assigned to the meanest of servants, and yet the Baptist declared himself not even

* Luke i, 80.

† Antiq., xviii, 5, § 2. Josephus gives John's popularity as the cause for Herod's putting him to death, "since," as he says, "they came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words; xx., they seemed to do everything he should advise;" and the king "thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late."

‡ Luke iii, 18.

worthy of such an office as that. Therefore, while curiosity with regard to John was stimulated among this demonstrative people, to the highest degree, it took a still more intense form as regarded the tenor of his predictions. The excitement among all classes was great. Their Rabbis searched the Scriptures, and especially the prophecies, with an interest suited to their wonderful expectations of glory and power to come with the Messiah, to their hatred of the Roman government, and to their felt position among all the nations of the earth: for the Jews were everywhere a slighted and despised people; while, on the other hand, "towards the rest of mankind," says Tacitus, "they nourished a sullen and inveterate hatred of strangers."*

The dying words of their great progenitor, Jacob, had been, ever since his time, dwelling as a perpetual hope in the national heart—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."†

The sceptre had departed: was Shiloh now there, as John declared? There was also a passage in Daniel pointing with peculiar significance to the present time; and everywhere people were now searching, with new interest, into his prophetic words. "Seventy weeks," says the prophet, "are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know,

* Hist. v, 5.

† Gen. xlix, 10.

therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build up Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks."* Allowing years for days, the seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years from the edict of Artaxerxes for rebuilding the city (B. C. 458) would bring the period for the appearing of the "Messiah the Prince" exactly to this time.

Thus all prophecy and all history were in harmony with John's annunciations respecting the Messiah; even foreign nations were expecting the advent of the Jewish Deliverer. How would he appear? How spread his conquests? How flash over the earth the glory of his reign?—were questions that had long been discussed in the Jewish schools; all with results tending to make the Jewish mind earthly and selfish. The whole nation was in a state of intense expectancy.

The Messiah came.

But how different he was from what the excited Jewish anticipations had pictured of his appearing!

Their favorite prophet had declared of him 780 years before, "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."† For the purposes of our redemption God saw fit that it should be so; but, notwithstanding that this prophecy was familiar to the Jews, still what a chasm between this actual appearing and that which they expected the appearing of the Messiah would be!

* Dan. ix, 24, 25.

† Isaiah liii, 2 and 3.

One day, amid those crowds at the Jordan, a stranger from Galilee presented himself for baptism ; but John drew back—

“ I have need,” he said, “ to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ?” The answer was simply :

“ Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.”

They descended to the stream, and Jesus received baptism of John.

They appear not to have met before ;* for their previous lives had been near the opposite extremes of Palestine,—one in Galilee, the other in the desert region in the south of Palestine ;—but the Divine Power, under which John was acting, had given him admonition that the Messiah, whom he had been preaching, was before him ; and the stern, lofty-toned man felt awed before this higher Presence:—the Messiah was there !

Of his personal appearance we have no authentic record ;† but never yet did a great thought take strong hold of any human being and not stamp itself, for the time, upon his face, and manifest itself in his eyes. Never yet was any grand emotion in the human heart, without impressing itself upon the features, and drawing there its unmistakable lines. Never yet was any true, permanent greatness in man, without having, for itself, a *presence*, felt and known and recognized by all as such. God has not made all men great in form, or fair to look upon ; but he does make grandeur of soul stamp itself upon the face ; and he makes it heard in the intonations of the

* John i, 33.

† The description attributed to Lentulus is universally considered spurious.

voice, and felt in the manner ; a something often undefinable, and yet making clear demonstration of itself. Sometimes these things are fleeting ; and they pass with the heavenlike nobility of soul ; the lines of care and our lower nature taking their place : but sometimes, even in man, benevolence, and gentleness, and love, and nobility and power of thought, are so habitual as to impress themselves permanently on his looks ; and we are drawn towards him by an attraction which our hearts cannot, and we do not, wish to resist. And, if this is so in man, earthy, dark in intellect, uncertain in judgment, compelled so often to grieve over sin, *what must have been Christ the sinless*, through whose face the Divinity looked out upon the universe which was his, and through whose eyes shone that love unutterable which brought him to our earth, here to die for us ? What a Being there was, then, before John and the multitudes, at Jordan ! a face, where Divine greatness, not fleeting but constant, had drawn the lines and sat constantly enthroned ; where gentleness, and meekness, and conscious omnipotence were harmonized ; and where every glance of the eye, every intonation of the voice, every lineament in the features, while showing the Divine supremacy within, were those also of one who had come in humility to seek and to save them that are lost. Who can wonder then that, when, even in the violence at Gethsemane, Jesus turned and looked upon his persecutors, they fell to the earth ? Who can wonder that, in the same night, a single look upon Peter turned that recreant's heart into a fountain of tears ? Or that Pilate, drawn by that majesty of *Presence* in Christ during the trial, sought, with such determination, to let him go ?

As the Messiah and John ascended from the baptism, a sign was given by which the latter, at the time he received his own divine mission, had been informed* that he should recognize Him whom he was to preach, and might know that the "kingdom of heaven" now had come. He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descend and light like a dove upon Christ, while a voice came down from the supernal glory: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."†

The mission of the Messiah had thus its heavenly endorsement, and here its beginning. It began in the waters of the Jordan: it was to be sealed in blood. It began with the opening glory of heaven poured down: it was to end with the sun hidden at midday, and a supernatural darkness, as of night, over the earth. The heavens then opened once again to receive him from mortal sight.

CHAPTER III.

THE DESERT.

AMONG the mountains, which, near the lower end of the Jordan, sweep in a semi-circular curve westwardly from the river and form a space for the great plain of Jericho, is one midway along called Quarantana, which rises almost perpendicularly from the edge of the plain

* John i, 33.

† Matt. xxxi, 16, 17.

to a height of twelve or fifteen hundred feet.* Of Jericho scarcely any vestiges can be found: the last solitary palm tree remaining from the forests of palms, for which the place was once famous, has lately disappeared: the plain, except a spot occupied by a few wretched dwellings, is desolate: the mountains bordering it have always been a scene of desolation, and the whole region is given up to lawless bands: yet, through the long hours of the night, a light may be seen far up among the crags of Quarantana, showing that some pilgrim is doing penance there in these wild solitudes. The front of the mountains is indeed honey-combed with hermits' cells; for, in ancient times, the place was a favorite one for anchorites, and the mountain takes its name from a tradition that to it the Messiah, after the baptism in the Jordan, was "led up by the Spirit," and there spent the forty days of his temptations in the wilderness. It is not probable that a spot looking down over a wide scene of what was then busy life—the great city and its surroundings—would have been chosen for such an occasion: but back of it, that is, to the westward and southward, is a region harmonizing with all that we conceive of those forty days of fasting and of the temptations. There, a great extent of country about 60 miles from north to south, and 15 wide; bordered on the east by the Dead Sea and precincts of the Jordan, and reaching on the west to within a few miles of Jerusalem itself, is one of singular barrenness and dreariness; looking, says the traveller Maundrell, "so torn and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion, in which the very bowels had been turned outward." It is, indeed, a re-

* Robinson.

gion of utter barrenness and of constant gloom. The country is all broken into hills generally of steep ascent ; and both hills and ravines are bare alike. The surface is a gray mouldering rock, or a gray earth, on which no vegetation will thrive ; and the whole, from century to century, has laid quite bare to the baking sun and the unfertilizing rains. Travellers through the deserts of Arabia tell us that the prevailing impression on their mind is of antiquity, and with regard to that country, the exclamation is forced from them, "how old it is !" but this region in Judea looks as if it had never been young, but had been a blasted and an accursed place from the beginning. All avoid it who can. In the days of our Saviour, robbers haunted its thoroughfares ; and, in our time, the few paths crossing it are made by the feet of marauders ; and he who sees a human being moving on its hills, however distant, expects violence, and prepares for defence. Deep chasms cross it here and there, at the sides of which the rocks almost meet, hundreds of feet above, and shut out the day ; and in their faces are the mouths of caverns, such as gave refuge to David and his pursued band.* A recent traveller, speaking of the more southern portion of this region, says the prospect before him was "indescribably stern and desolate : " and speaks of "the fantastic forms of the rocks on the foreground, a medley of gray limestones, yellowish gravel, and fragments of lava, here piled up in perpendicular cliffs, there laid one above the other in flat strata, and yonder rent asunder in frightful chasms ; between these, a plain covered with a number of conical hills, white, gray and yellow, all the produce of subterranean

* I Samuel xxiv.

fire :”—this at the close of March, when vegetation in Judea is in its highest perfection. Of the more northern portions, equally desolate, we shall have a future occasion to speak more in detail.

To this “ Wilderness of Judea,” as it was called, the Messiah, after his baptism, was “ led of the Spirit to be tempted ;” and there he remained forty days.

We are now at one of those events in Christ’s earthly ministry, where the supernatural is blended so greatly with the natural that, with our limited capacities, we have to be content with ignorance, and to gaze, though wonderingly yet silently, at the little which has been revealed. How can we understand, or expect to understand, where the spiritual and the material come, thus mingled in joint action ; and where the mysteries of the unseen world, which our intellects in vain strive to penetrate, and which they could not comprehend if seen, are so imperfectly developed that we catch but a glimpse here and there as they flit before our minds ? We must remember that the times we are now considering were those when the most wonderful event of all ages was having its scene of action on our earth ; when the Divinity took our nature, and, in an union incomprehensible to us, was in great humility among men.—Incomprehensible ; for how can we understand that, when the union of our own souls and bodies is a mystery beyond our comprehension,—an every-day mystery, and familiar, but yet never once penetrated by human science ? How can we understand, then, the Divine and human in one, or hope, in the least degree, to understand ? We may gather from the Inspired Word that in those

* Van de Velde’s “ Journey through Syria and Palestine.”

days, when heaven came down to earth, and the two were blended as never before, and never to be again,—that then a *general agitation* occurred, and spirits gave demonstrations of presence and power, in demoniacs and the possessed, to which the world at other times had been a stranger, and which have never been repeated since. The Scriptures tell us of a time yet to be, when the powers of heaven *shall be shaken*; Christ coming to judge;—a time far less wonderful than this period, when he was on the earth, God manifest, but in humility for man's redemption to be effected in the cross. Who shall object in these matters? Who dare gainsay concerning things beyond our comprehension, when we cannot understand ourselves? Men are indeed but children—the oldest and wisest in the world, but children—when put in comparison with the supernatural world, where, with God, “a thousand years are but as yesterday;” and where, among the infinites, our imaginations strive in vain for a resting-place for observation, and so turn quickly back to earth wearied and overwhelmed.

Therefore humility is now our rational and our better part; and, with such a sense of our condition we have repeatedly to gaze on the scenes recorded in the Gospels, not comprehending them, and compelled to be satisfied with present ignorance. It was a time, we may believe, when “the powers of heaven” and of hell “were shaken;” as they never otherwise had been; and our earth, the scene of action, had to witness unusual sights.

Then, when these scenes of the temptation in the wilderness of Judea pass in those strange, shadowy forms before us, half revealed in the Gospels, half

hidden—we gaze in wonder, but we acquiesce in not understanding more. How could we fully understand?

Saint Paul, through the power of inspiration, tells us, “In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest;” and that “We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin;” and the temptations in the wilderness appear to have been suited to the higher spiritual character of the tempted. There were three of them, applied to those feelings which are the most powerful in our own nature,—to ambition, to vanity, and to bodily want; each applied in this case in a concentrated form; but each in vain. But we cease to argue in matters so evidently above our reason; we will wait patiently till we may merge into the supernatural, and no longer see “through a glass darkly,” but “shall know even as we are known.”

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE JORDAN—THE DEPUTATION.

JOHN was still baptizing at the Jordan, still uttering his call to repent, “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;” and still the excitement concerning him

° Hebrews ii. 17; iv. 15.

was continuing : the public wonder and curiosity indeed was on the increase. The Sanhedrim at Jerusalem were presently stirred up to take official action in his case.

This body, *συνέδριον*, *assembly*, consisted of seventy persons, with the addition of the high-priest as president ; and were from the following classes of persons : 1. Ex-high-priest ; 2. Heads of the twenty-four classes of high-priests, called, by way of honor, *chief-priests* : 3. Such of the elders, i. e., princes of the tribes, heads of family associations, as were elected to this place, or put there by a nomination from the ruling executive authority ; and, 4. Appointments in a similar way from the scribes and learned men.* It was required of these men that they should be religious, and learned in the arts and language ; that they should have some skill in physic, arithmetic, astronomy and astrology ; also to know what belonged to magic, sorcery and idolatry, so as to know how to judge them. They were to be without maim or blemish ; men of years, but not extremely old ; and to be fathers of families, that they might be acquainted with tenderness and compassion. Their times for sitting were from the end of the morning service to the beginning of the evening service, but might be prolonged till the night, if necessary for concluding any business commenced during the day ; but no new business could be undertaken in the night. Their place of assembling was in a room by the courts of the Temple, and was so arranged that a portion of it projected into the priests' court, in order that it might partake of the sanctity of the place ; and part was

* Jahn's Archæology.

outside of it, so that the members could *sit* in the council, which no one could do in the court of the priests, except a king.* The first mention of the Sanhedrim is about the year B. C. 69 ; it is supposed to have had its origin in the Council of 70 Elders appointed by Moses at Sinai, (Numbers xi. 16–24.) It had the power to judge all persons and all matters not left to inferior courts, a whole tribe, a prophet, the high-priest, and even a king himself if there were occasion.†

In every city there was a smaller tribunal of the judges and Levites for slighter cases : also a tribunal of 23 judges (synagogue tribunals, John xvi. 2,) which tried questions of a religious nature.

The Sanhedrim felt now that it had become of the highest consequence to settle the important questions concerning John, which were agitating the public mind. There might have been fears of tumults, when the Roman power would have interfered, as it had done before, with vengeance upon the nation, if the whole course of things at the Jordan had not been so orderly and regular : moreover, the ascetic had never put himself forward as a leader, but had proclaimed himself secondary to another. People, however, believed him to be a prophet, and the excitement was the greater from the lapse of centuries since a prophet had appeared. A wonderful prophet too he seemed to be, with this most extraordinary annunciation ; also introducing a great revolution, by initiating the crowds flocking to him into a new system of religion. He had given offence to the two leading sects in Judea by his invective hurled upon them as a brood of vipers, but the

* Lightfoot on the Temple.

† Jahn's Archæology.

people felt its justice and admired his boldness :—the impression was growing, everywhere, that he was something beyond a mortal like themselves ;—that he was Elias (Elijah), or Jeremiah, risen from the dead ; and, among some,—misinterpreting his declarations to the contrary,—that he was the Messiah himself. The Pharisees believed that the power of baptizing Jews, and thereby forming a new religion, was to be confined to the Messiah and his precursors, the prophets, who they supposed would return to life for this purpose ; and although it was true that John's ancestry did not fully agree with the requirements of their ancient prophets respecting the Christ, yet his mother was of the lineage of David ; and although in addition, his place of birth had not been at Bethlehem, still it was not fully determined among the doctors that the Messiah must be born there.* So there was room for discussion among the Sanhedrim even on the question whether John might not be the Messiah himself.

Therefore this national council, taking Pharisees, who were also priests and Levites,† for their deputation, sent them to John.‡ The Jewish rulers

* See Bloomfield *in loco*.

† John i, 19 ; i, 24.

‡ John i, 19. It is well to remark here on a circumstance in St. John's Gospel, of which I have seen no notice among critics, except Alford, although it is an important one. It is the distinction which the Evangelist appears to make between "the Jews" and "the people." By the former he seems to mean *the leaders* ; by the latter, *the masses*. There is a striking example of this in ch. vii, v. 13, when the *people* (v. 12) were querying about Christ, "but no man spake openly of him for fear of *the Jews*." The same distinction seems to be kept up uniformly in John, except where the term Jew is used as a distinctive national one.

We have something like it when we use the words, "the Eng-

were almost exclusively Pharisees, or persons professing to be such ; and that sect was more particularly interested in the proceedings at the Jordan : for their power lay in their influence over the masses of the people ; the only instrument they could oppose to their rivals the smaller but wealthier sect of the Sadducees ; and the masses were drawn powerfully to this prophet at the Jordan.

The origin of both these leading sects is unknown, and we have no distinct traces of them previous to the Ptolemies, (B. C. 332,) about which time the *oral* or *traditional law* also comes before our notice. The Pharisees were the advocates and conservators of this ; the Sadducees opposed it, adhering only to the *written law*. The Pharisees believed "that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards and punishments, accordingly as they have lived, virtuously or viciously, in this life ; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have the power to revive and live again."* The Sadducees asserted "that souls die with the bodies ;" and in this opposition of belief on vital points we have at once the groundwork of endless disputes between these sects. The Sadducees, however, were content to keep their cold philosophy to themselves, and seldom attempted to make proselytes ; but they were the wealthy men, and prided themselves on their superior wisdom and higher philosophy ; to which

lish," and the "English people," meaning by the former a kind of abstraction of the rulers, or the sentiment seen in their government, and by the latter, the masses.

* Jahn's *Archæology*.

the Pharisees opposed an affected sanctimoniousness, which drew to them the multitudes, over whom they had great influence, and by whom they more than counterbalanced the power in wealth belonging to their opponents. So domineering, indeed, was their influence in the nation in consequence of their successful zeal in making and keeping proselytes among the masses, that when a Sadducee had to take office, (which that sect did unwillingly), he was compelled, for his own comfort, to assume the character and pretend to the belief of the Pharisees. The latter had in the *unwritten* law, as we shall see, by and by, an immense power, capable of bearing down any adversary who might oppose them, especially among the ignorant. With all this courting of popular favor, they, however, thoroughly despised the populace, and called them in their writings "worms," "people of the earth;" and, with other opprobrious epithets, refused heaven to them, declaring, that "he who has not studied is never pious."* They affected a great outward show of religion, ostentatiously standing while at prayer, (standing was the usual Jewish posture in prayer,) at the corners of the streets, so as to be seen in two directions; and sometimes commencing a prayer at one place and going to finish it at another. They made broad their phylacteries (written passages of Scripture, folded up and bound to the forehead and arm), and in their dress had an ostentation of a similar kind. They were so fearful of contamination that they would not eat with their own people, if holding the unpopular office of tax-gatherers; and were disposed to spurn from their

* Lightfoot.

presence all who were not of their own sect ;* nor would they drink until the water had been strained, lest they might inadvertently swallow some unclean animalcules. With all this, they enjoined no internal righteousness, substituting externals for it : forms took the place of holiness : an omission to wash the hands before meat was considered worthy of death, no matter what iniquity might be in the heart : and they had brought the Jewish people into disrepute abroad as a nation of perjurers,† by teaching that an oath by the altar, temple, heaven, earth, sacrifices, &c., &c., was of small, if any, obligation, unless the name of God had been introduced. They were divided into several subordinate sects ; and the Jewish official books, the Talmuds, mention several distinct classes, under characters which show them to have been deeply immersed in the idlest and most ridiculous superstitions. Among them were the *Truncated Pharisees*, who, that he might appear in profound meditation, as if destitute of feet, scarcely lifted them from the ground ; the *Mortar Pharisee*, who, that his meditations might not be disturbed, wore a deep cap, in the shape of a mortar, that would only permit him to look on the ground at his feet ; and the *Striking Pharisee*, who, shutting his eyes as he walked to avoid the sight of women, often struck his head against the wall.‡

Such were the men who came now, in the authority of office, to settle the questions which had been discussed for weeks with deepest earnestness in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea and the regions beyond ;—questions of momentous interest, but to which no one could yet give a satisfactory reply. It was

* Jahn's Archæology. † Martial's Epigrams, xi. 95. ‡ Bloomfield.

known that John had made disclaimers of any high position ; but still the public mind was agitated ; for with these disclaimers, he was yet performing a rite belonging only to the old prophets risen again or to the Messiah : so, at least, they always believed.

The crowds saw the officials approaching, and could easily surmise who they were, and why they came. All knew that it was among the duties of the Sanhedrim to inquire officially into the pretensions of any one setting himself up as a prophet ; and here were the inquisitors come to do that work. The important queries which had so agitated the multitudes there, but which they had shrunk from putting to the Baptist, would, perhaps, be answered at last.

The crowds gave way. Probably, in those haughty looks of the Pharisees they could read their own condemnation for being captivated by one not officially recognized, and not a Rabbi ; their old reverence for priest and Levite, and additionally for Pharisees, conservators of the unwritten law with its mysterious, undefined power, crept through their hearts again, as they saw these men approach,—perhaps there to overwhelm all the Baptist's claims, and to hurl on themselves objurgations or even excommunications for having submitted to the new rite.—And the deputation came in a manner to make impression of their authority, and to procure full and ready answers to their questions :—the phylacteries upon their brows and arms, and with the wide fringes to their robes, as became Pharisees and men of rank. We must give attention to them, and we notice, first the phylacteries, an awkward appendage, but which habit made less so to them. To construct a phylactery, four pieces of parch-

ment were taken, on which, with a particular kind of ink, were written four passages from the law, Ex. xiii, 3-10 : Ex. xiii, 11-16 : Deut. vi, 4-9 : Deut. xi, 13-21. These four pieces were folded together in a square form, and inserted into a leather case, from which proceeded thongs of the same material. One of these cases was laid on the forehead between the eye-brows ; and the thongs, being passed behind the head, were tied there in a particular manner, and then came round to the breast. The other was laid on the inside of the left arm, at the elbow, and fastened there by the thongs, one of which was wound spirally along the arm, and so, crossing the palm of the hand, was fastened to the fingers. The usage was founded on Ex. xiii, 9. The name phylactery is from the Greek, and signifies observatory, because it put them in mind of the law. In process of time the phylacteries came to be considered as a protection against evil spirits, and the Talmud says, "It is necessary that the phylacteries should be repeated at home at nights to drive away devils."* It is not certain whether all the Jewish people wore them, or only those who were called scholars, and who pretended to more knowledge and devotion and study than the common people ;† but all, both learned and unlearned, were bound alike to say over the phylactery sentences, morning and evening, every day, no matter where they were. The time for this was at earliest dawn, and in the evenings some time before the first watch.‡ Our Saviour condemns the width of the phylacteries, made for ostentation and vanity. The modern Jews, it is said, wear them at morning and evening prayers.

* Lightfoot.

† Ib.

‡ Ib.

This deputation approached, not over confident of a favorable reception, knowing as they did the Baptist's address to their Pharisee brethren on the former occasion: and now there was a striking scene;—that gaunt, sunburnt man, in his coarse dress of camel's hair bound by a leathern girdle, his unabashed manner before the officers, and his fiery eyes seeming to pierce them through;—their own stateliness and effort at ease and assurance, while their pretension to sanctity, and the authoritiveness of office were impressing the crowd;—the multitudes glancing from the new, admired favorite to their old, feared masters; and back again to the fearless John.

"Who art thou?" they asked.

The words were authoritative and abrupt. He answered, not to their question, but to what he knew was in every person's mind.

"I am not the Christ."

"What art thou, then, Elias?"

"I am not."

"Art thou that prophet?"*

"No."

"Who art thou?—that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"

"I am, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias:" (the reply having allusion to a custom prevailing in those eastern countries, when a monarch was about to make a journey; at which times men were sent before to remove obstructions and to make level the roads).

* It is supposed that they referred to Jeremiah. (See Deut. xviii, 15-19 and Matt. xvi, 14.

“Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?”

“I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

Among them!! And all interest in the officials and in John himself must have been lost, as men started, and turned inquiring glances among the crowd, making scrutiny for him about whom the astounding announcement had been made. No one could doubt that John meant by this, *The Christ*, the great Messiah that had been promised to the world. That was their answer, and such the intelligence that the emissaries might carry back to Jerusalem, and to the Sanhedrim.

Curiosity was at its utmost tension now; and the next day, as the crowds were watching John with a closeness of attention that they had never exercised before, they heard from him a sudden announcement—

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” The multitudes turned quickly;—

Was that the Christ!

He came with no pomp, but quietly among them: no earthly parade of power, no attendance; not even scholastic state, and disciples following him: but alone, in simplicity of dress and simplicity of manner.—His kingdom was not of this world.

But the multitudes might have noticed the wonderful dignity and majesty on that brow; the quiet composure of manner, where conscious omnipotence calmly rested; the winningness of features, where unbounded love drew the lines, and fully impressed it-

self; and, when he spake, the modulations of his voice, where gentleness and benevolence ruled, although, at times that voice could take the impressive tones of command.

John described to the earnest listeners how the demonstration of the Messiahship had been made to himself, including the announcement from heaven, "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." He ended with proclaiming to the gazing, earnest, wondering multitude, thrilled with so many hopes—"And I saw and bare record, that THIS IS THE SON OF GOD."

CHAPTER V.

CONDITION OF PALESTINE.

THE Messiah had come: but before following him in his wonderful ministry, it is necessary, in order to have a clear comprehension of it, to endeavor to familiarize ourselves with the country where this ministry was to be exercised, and the people who were to be its immediate recipients.

The two ranges of mountains, Lebanon and Anti-lebanon, keep parallel with each other, and with the eastern coast of the Mediterranean for a distance of 150 miles, when, finally, Anti-lebanon shoots up into the majestic Hermon, rising to 9376* feet above the

* Survey by Majors Scott and Pope.

sea, and covered nearly all the year with snow. Both mountains then subside into much lower elevations, which uniting, continue southward till at last they sink and disappear in the level of the sandy deserts of Arabia. The region between the southern extremity of Lebanon and the Hermon (lat. $33^{\circ} 30'$) on the north, and the border of the Arabian deserts ($31^{\circ} 10'$) on the south, with the Jordan and its line of lakes on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west, is, in modern times, often designated as Palestine; and such in this book will be the use of the word. It is an extent of country about 170 statute miles in length, by a mean width of 50 miles; the hills running north and south are not continuous, but have an important interruption in the great plain of Esdraeldon (about lat. $32^{\circ} 30'$) crossing their course; and another in the valley at Shechem, with others of minor consequence: while also just south of Carmel, in lat. $32^{\circ} 40'$, commences the plain of Sharon, which, from that point southwardly, forms a wide border between the hills and the Mediterranean. The region between this plain of Sharon and the desert bordering on the Jordan and the Dead Sea, forms what, in Scripture, is called "The Hill country of Judæa." A cross section, from west to east, at Jerusalem, would give us: 1st, the plain of Sharon, 17 miles wide; 2d, the hill country, 20 miles; and 3d, the desert, 15 in width, and then the great depression of the valley of the Jordan.* If, leaving Palestine, we continue across the river, we come immediately to the very lofty, wall-like range of Nebo,

* These measurements are from Van de Velde's trigonometrical surveys in Syria and Palestine.

beyond which, eastwardly, is a hilly pastoral region, never thickly inhabited, and at present little known.

Palestine was thus a country of small extent, and singularly situated; quite central to what was the civilized world in those ancient times, and therefore well adapted to be a radiating point of divine knowledge; and yet, by these northern mountains, by the Arabian desert, by the western sea, and by the pastoral region on the east, almost isolated, and little open to corrupting influences from heathen neighbors. It had no safe harbor along its whole coast, until Herod the Great, at immense cost, formed one midway along; building there, also, his political capital, Cæsarea, named after his patron, Augustus. This was settled immediately by a motley population of Syrians and Greeks chiefly, as well as Jews: and from this mixture sprung, finally, the troubles which eventuated in the destruction of Jerusalem itself.*

At the time of which we are now writing, Palestine was divided into three nearly equal portions: the northern, Galilee; the central, Samaria; and the southern, Judea; each, with its distinctive and peculiar people, although those of Galilee and Judea went under the general appellation of Jews. A full understanding of the New Testament history requires that we should take some notice of the history of each.

When Canaan was first parceled out among the twelve tribes, the large tribe of Judah had assigned to it the chief portion of what afterwards became Judea: while Ephraim had most of what was subsequently Samaria, the two being separated by the small tribe of Benjamin wedged between them on the east,

* See Jos. Antiq. xx, 8, § 9.

and by the equally diminutive region of Dan on the west. Benjamin, however, though small, was composed of a bold and energetic set of people : it gave Saul, as the first king of Israel ; and afterwards, Paul, the greatest of the Christian leaders, and among the earliest martyrs for Christ.

Judah and Ephraim, from their large size and their position, soon took the lead among the tribes, and also became jealous of each other :* and finally (B. C. 976) their rivalry culminated in a separation of the tribes ; Benjamin alone adhering to Judah, while all the others went off and became a kingdom by themselves, Ephraim, in this, taking the lead. Its main city, Shechem, in the valley of Samaria, unsurpassed in fertility and loveliness, became the capital of its new king. Among these people, a semi-idolatrous religion soon took the place of the old Mosaic faith. Two hundred and fifty-five years after this (B. C. 721) the ten tribes were carried into captivity by Shalmanezar, king of Assyria ; and their existence became eventually blotted out from history. The exceedingly fertile plain of Ephraim and its borders on the north, being rapidly covered with jungle, was becoming overrun with wild-beasts, when Shalmanezar sent colonists from Babylonia and other parts of his eastern dominions to occupy it, with whom a few of the former inhabitants, who had been left behind, united : and thus was formed the distinct and very peculiar race of the Samaritans, retaining in part their eastern heathenism, and partly imbued with the questionable religion of the ten tribes.

One hundred thirty-three years after the captivity of the ten tribes, (B. C. 588) Judah and Benjamin were also led captive to the east, Jerusalem having been

* See also Isaiah xi, 3.

taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and their temple destroyed. Chaldea, now the ruling power in the east, had become the possessor of all Palestine. But this captivity did not long continue ; for Cyrus, the Persian, having taken Babylon, (B. C. 536) gave these two tribes permission to return to Palestine and to rebuild their temple, the sacred vessels of which he also restored. Some of the Jews, comparatively few in number, remained in Babylon, while the others hastened back to their country : but during this time of their absence changes of importance among themselves had occurred. *Their original language had ceased to be a spoken one.*

The Hebrew had, for a long time, been declining in its purity. The period about the time of Moses is called by critics its *golden age* ; that between David and Hezekiah, its *silver age*. From Hezekiah to the captivity it had deteriorated so much by the further introduction of foreign terms, that its *iron age* is placed in that period ; and during the captivity it ceased to be a spoken language at all.* Not that the transition had been very great. The dialects spoken all over the East had a general similitude, so great that the designation used by the Hebrews for *very remote* nations was that these did not understand their language.† But still the change, during this stay in Babylon, was such that, generally, they could not any longer understand the Hebrew Scriptures when read in their religious assemblies ; and although the original was still used in public worship, properly qualified persons had to be employed to give immediately a translation into the vernacular.‡

* Jahn's Introduction to the Old Testament, § 69.

† Deut. xxviii, 49, and Jer. v, 15. ‡ See Nehemiah viii, 8.

The new dialect which the people brought home with them was the Aramean—sometimes called Syro-Chaldaic—and was the language of Palestine in our Saviour's time.

But there were differences also in this dialect. The places of captivity had stretched along the Euphrates, where the Chaldee and Syriac dialects were in use. On their return, those using the former settled in Judea, the others in Galilee;* and hence a difference of speech, by which a Galilean was speedily recognized as such by the dwellers further south.

The Jews had permission from Cyrus to rebuild also the wall around their city; and they came back with hearts full of zeal and of joy at the royal favor, in both of which the Samaritans would have gladly shared. But these people were repelled as a half-heathenish race; and immediately a settled feud began, which has continued down to the present time. The Samaritans endeavored to excite jealousies in the Persian monarch respecting the repairs in the city walls, and for some time with success; but they finally ceased from such opposition, and established rival services, building also a rival temple on the mount Gerizim, which rises immediately above their capital city, Shechem; and which, with its opposite mountain, Ebal, had been the scene of a most singular event in the ancient times of Israel. There, after Canaan had been conquered, had been gathered the twelve tribes, one-half placed on Gerizim to bless, and half on Ebal to curse;—indeed, what region is there in all the country of Palestine that has not witnessed strange and wonderful events? To us, also,

* Jahn's Introduction.

there is a standing miracle in the fulfillment of the words of Moses, when, after commanding the full assemblage to take place on Ebal and Gerizim, he added, that if they and their posterity would not observe God's commandment, they should become "an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations," whither the Lord should lead them.* The Maccabean, Hyrcanus, destroyed this temple (B. C. 108), and annexed the whole Samaritan country to the Jewish nation ; and the bitterness from subjugation was then added to the former hatred and jealousies. The Samaritans, while receiving the Pentateuch, rejected all the other Jewish Scriptures ; and were, therefore, still considered by the Jews as only a more dangerous set of heathen. What a Samaritan ate as food became, from that fact, as swine's flesh in the eyes of a Jew ; no Samaritan might be made a proselyte ; no one of them could by any possibility, in Jewish estimation, attain to everlasting life.

This was, the country lying between the two Jewish districts of Galilee and Judea, and which had to be passed over in the frequent journeys between the two, unless a large *detour* was made across the Jordan and along its eastern banks.

The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, after their return from captivity, still formed a part of the Persian kingdom, and were heavily taxed for its support. Their temple had been rebuilt, (commenced B. C. 535.) but Jerusalem remained without walls, until the increase of the Greek power made it necessary to oppose obstacles to the extension of that nation. Then Nehemiah was empowered by the Persian government

* See Deut. xi, 29 ; xxvii. 12-26 ; xxviii.

to fortify the city ; but he had to do it by stealth, and at night, as the jealousies of the neighboring states, particularly Samaria, were ever throwing obstacles in the way. The Persian nation finally succumbed before Alexander, and the Jews passed quietly into the power of that universal conqueror (B. C. 332,) and through him, afterwards, of the Ptolemies. They lived under successive kings of this race, generally oppressed, and often treated with great cruelty, till Antiochus Epiphanes, the *Illustrious* or the *Madman*,—for he had both these surnames,—fearing (B. C. 167) that they might seek relief from his tyranny in the increasing power of Rome already triumphant in Egypt, determined to wipe out their distinctive character, and entirely destroy their individuality as a nation. He let loose his soldiers on the Sabbath upon the unresisting Jewish people, and encouraged a general massacre: the streets of Jerusalem ran with blood: the women were carried off into slavery: he ordered a general uniformity of religion in all his dominions; forced the people to profane the Sabbath, and to eat swine's flesh, and forbade the national rite of circumcision. He dedicated their temples to Jupiter, placed an image of that god on their high altar, and ordered sacrifices to be there made to the Olympian deity; and, finally, substituted the Bacchanalian rites for their great feast of tabernacles. Resistance only led to slaughter: barbarities and outrage had full possession of the land.

The Maccabean family* now rose into eminence,

* "Asmonean family" properly, but better known by the name of Maccabean, supposed to be derived from a standard which they bore.

first by slight resistance ; then, after gathering strength, by heading a general revolt ; and, finally, (B. C. 144,) by establishing the complete independence of the Jewish nation. The alliance of Rome was sought for, and secured ; and, finally, under Hyrcanus, Samaria, as already stated, and Galilee on the north, and Idumea on the south, were (B. C. 108) brought into subjection to the triumphant kingdom of Judea. But a new power—the Roman—was spreading around, soon to absorb the Judean kingdom, as it did the rest of the world. In the case of Judea, Rome followed its usual successful policy of insinuating itself into nations through their intestine disputes. Two competitors for the Jewish throne, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, both of the Maccabean family, asserted their claims, and appealed to Pompey (B. C. 64) as the umpire ; he ended by seizing on the kingdom ; and from that time, although for twenty years there were resistances, and various bloody revolutions, Judea was under control of the Roman empire. Antipater, an Idumean of noble birth, profiting adroitly by these dissensions, had, as the supporter of Hyrcanus, risen into distinction ; and at last, having procured from Rome the High Priesthood for his favorite, he was himself made Procurator of Judea. He was the father of Herod the Great, and appointed this son as governor of Galilee. The latter, after various reverses subsequently to his father's death, had the crown of Judea conferred upon himself by Augustus and Antony (B. C. 39 ;) and having, with the assistance of the Romans, rid that country and Samaria of all competitors, and freed Galilee from the bands of robbers that had infested

it, he found himself, though still subordinate to Rome, firmly seated on the throne of Palestine.

He was a man of extraordinary energies of mind and body. He rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, strengthened them with towers of great size and beauty, made for himself on Mount Zion a palace of vast extent and architectural magnificence, and completed the walls around Moriah, producing on that eminence a level platform of great elevation ;* thus making it a vast mountainous substructure for supporting the cloisters and temple with which he proposed to crown its heights. The temple erected by Zerubbabel 500 years before, had suffered greatly from wars and the lapse of time ; but the Jews looked with keen jealousy on any plans for its demolition ; and it was only by making large preparations of materials ready for the new edifice, previous to commencing any changes, that Herod could keep their apprehensions within bounds. The new temple and cloisters, built by Herod will be noticed in a future chapter of this book. The amazing sums necessary for his outlays for architectural and warlike purposes were procured partly by heavy extortions from his people ; and came partly by contributions from Jews, scattered now over nearly the whole civilized world. The constant drain of wealth always tending towards Jerusalem was the cause of serious apprehensions, even at Rome. Pompey found 2,000 talents† in the treasury of the temple at the time of his visit : Crassus plundered it

* Josephus says 450 feet at the spot of the smallest elevation ; 600 feet at the greatest, i. e., at the eastern side, but this is considered an exaggeration.

† A talent of silver was worth \$1,505 ; of gold, \$24,000.

of 10,000 talents ; and both these incidents occurred at times when Jerusalem was also constantly subject to visits from plundering hordes.

But while indulging the national feeling in thus ornamenting the city and its sacred mountain, Herod was trying to undermine the national faith, by foreign usages and amusements. "He built a theatre within the walls of Jerusalem, and an amphitheatre of immense size without. He celebrated quinquennial games on a scale of unrivalled splendor ; invited the most distinguished proficient in every kind of gymnastic exercise, in chariot racing, boxing, and every kind of musical and poetic art ; offered the most costly prizes ; and even introduced the barbarous spectacles of the Romans, fights of wild beasts, and also combats of wild beasts with gladiators. The zealous Jews looked on in amazement, and with praiseworthy though silent abhorrence, at those strange exhibitions, so contrary to the mild genius of the great law-giver's institutions."*

Herod was, as already stated, from Idumea. When that country was added by Hyrcanus to Judea, the inhabitants were compelled to adopt the Jewish faith. But such a forced proselytism left the Idumeans still semi-pagan in belief ; and hence we see the doubtful Judaism in Herod. He married, both from policy and affection, the beautiful Mariamne, a princess of the Maccabean family ; but he failed still to secure the confidence of the Jews.

Judea was, even during Herod's magnificent reign, fast becoming a Roman province ; its independence and the glory of the Maccabean dynasty had depart-

* Milman's History of the Jews.

ed. Herod, after a life of daring and successful ambition, and of domestic wretchedness, died, leaving, by will, his kingdom divided between his two sons, Herod Antipas and Archelaus ; to the former Galilee and Perea ; to the latter, Samaria, Judea, and Idumea. Archelaus went immediately to Rome to have his limited kingship confirmed ; and there met Herod Antipas, preferring a counter-claim under a former will of their father, made, it was asserted, when he was in a saner state of mind. While they were absent contesting their claims ; both regions of country fell into confusion ; and the Prefect of Syria, residing at Antioch, had to interfere, the wretched people being plundered and abused on every side. A deputation of five hundred Jews went to Rome to petition for the total abolition of the kingly government and the restitution of their ancient constitution ; and were joined in this by eight thousand of their countrymen resident in that city. Herod's will was, however, confirmed by the imperial edict, and Archelaus took possession of his government : but his sovereignty, marked by injustice and cruelty, after continuing for nine years, was suddenly brought to a conclusion by a summons to Rome : his brothers and subjects were his accusers ; he was condemned and banished to Vienne, in Gaul, and his kingdom (A. D. 12) reduced to a Roman province. P. Sulpicius Quirinius was now made Prefect, or governor-general of Syria, all Palestine coming under his jurisdiction ; and Coponius, a man of equestrian rank, was appointed governor of Judea. To the latter, two years afterwards, succeeded M. Ambivius ; then came Annius Rufus : next (A. D. 16) Valerius Gratus, and finally (A. D. 27) Pontius Pilate. Jerusalem

itself had sunk, during the rule of these governors, into secondary political consequence, the residence of the governors being at Cæsarea, a magnificent city on its seaboard, built by Herod the Great : but the people, since the time of Archelaus, had enjoyed an unusual state of rest. This history, necessarily brief, can give the reader scarcely any conception of the disorders, tumults, exactions, and cruelties—often barbarities, to which the people of Palestine had been subjected, through nearly the whole of this long period of time.

The government was now unequivocally Roman : Pilate was over Judea as Procurator, and Herod Antipas Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea ;—both subject to the Proconsul of Syria ; the Jewish laws and institutions, so far as they did not conflict with the Roman, were still left in force, the power of inflicting capital punishment being the only exception ; that being reserved for the representatives of Rome. Such was the political condition of Palestine when our Saviour's public ministry commenced.

CHAPTER VI.

JEWISH MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

THE captivity had wrought one very remarkable change in the Jewish character :—it had cured them of their disposition towards idolatry. It may seem strange that there had ever been such inclinations

among a people distinguished, as they had been, by signal manifestations of God's power for them; who had his law in their hands; and who knew both the sternness of his prohibitions against this wickedness, and his irrevocable purposes for punishing it. But the whole world around them was given to idolatry: and they found it difficult to spiritualize even their own grand and wonderful system; while, among all other nations, religion was *sensuous*, that is, directed to the outer senses, which could more easily comprehend the nature and demands of such belief. To look inward and bind the soul to God, making it, while on earth, a part of the kingdom which is not of this world, is the highest act of our being: and the Jews had not only not attained to this, but had a very imperfect idea of what it could mean. When just released from Egypt, they were ignorant, and they had, for long years, been brutalized by slavery. God, compassionating their ignorance and weakness, allowed them a religious system in some respects sensuous, but, in every item, typifying the unseen; that is the tabernacle, the ark, the table of show-bread, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the mercy-seat, the cherubim, the golden ornaments, the purple hangings, the Urim and Thummim, in which he condescended to make himself especially known and felt. So afterwards, also with the temple on Mount Moriah, honored as no other temple has ever been. But they regarded only the exterior; and by their own want of effort and by their worldliness, that which was meant to guide them to look within and then up to God, led them to the further sensuousness of their neighbors, often of the grossest kind.

Temple, altar, cherubim, Urim and Thummim,—all were swept away by the Assyrian conqueror ; and only blackened ruins remained behind in their stead.

In their captivity they had to look more directly to God ; and they did it in mournings and humiliations, such as well befitted them, after so many vile apostasies in their own land.

When they returned there was a great change and great improvement in these outward things. They had now the *proseuchæ* and synagogues all over the land. The *proseucha* was a place of prayer, a simple, open space, without ostentation or ornament, but generally in a spot outside of their cities or towns, shaded by trees. Here the traveller or the resident could bow in soul, in God's great temple not made with hands ; and, feeling that Jehovah was present, could lift up his voice and heart to him. The synagogues were places of more formal worship, and were soon in general use : there being, it is said, in Jerusalem alone, not less than four hundred and eighty during its later times. The worship in these was doubtless more of a spiritual nature than that in the temple itself ; and what was also of consequence, oral instruction was here largely combined with the singing, reading, and prayers. The Jewish people, in all this, had evidently taken a most important step in improvement ; but still there were counteracting circumstances, (to be noticed in next chapter,) terribly corrupting their hearts.

The synagogues were of various sizes, but generally not large. As far as possible they were built in imitation of the temple at Jerusalem, with an open court and corridors surrounding the court. In this

was a chapel, or small building, ornamented with four columns ; and in the chapel, on an elevated place, were the books of the law kept ready for use. The "uppermost seats in the synagogue" were those nearest this chapel, and these were the most honorable. In addition, there was erected, in the court, a large hall or vestry, into which people could retire when the weather happened to be unfavorable, and where each family had their particular seat. To each building there were officers : 1st.—The Ruler of the Synagogue, who presided over the assembly and invited readers and speakers, unless some persons, who were acceptable, voluntarily offered themselves, (Luke viii, 41, and xiii, 14, 15.) 2.—The Elders of the synagogue—πρεσβύτεροι, or presbyters ; they appear to have been counsellors of the head or ruler, and were chosen from among the most powerful and learned of the people. The council of the elders not only took part in the management of the internal concerns of the synagogue, but also punished transgressors of the public laws, either by turning them out of the synagogue or decreeing the punishment of thirty-nine stripes, (John xii, 42 ; xvi, 2 ; 2 Cor. xi, 24.) 3.—Collector of alms ; and, 4.—Servants of the synagogue. When the people were collected together for worship the services began, after the usual greeting, with a doxology. A selection was then read from the Mosaic law, (Acts xv, 21.) Then followed after singing of a second doxology, the reading of a portion from the Prophets. (Luke iv, 17.) The person whose duty it was to perform the reading, placed upon his head, as is done at the present day, a covering called *Talith*. (See 2 Cor. iii, 15.) The sections which had

been read in the Hebrew, were rendered by an interpreter into the vernacular tongue ; and the reader, or some one else, then addressed the people. (Acts xiii, 15.)

It was on an occasion such as this, that Jesus, and, afterwards, the Apostles, taught the people. The meeting, as far as religion was concerned, was ended with prayer, to which the people responded, *Amen* ; when a collection was taken for the poor.

Such was the synagogue worship of that period, often sanctioned by our Saviour's presence, and by his taking a part in the services themselves.

The modern Jewish synagogues are, as far as possible, imitations of those ancient ones ; and a visit to them is recommended to any one who may desire to look far back into the ancient times. We may also gain in them some idea of the adaptation to music of the language in which David wrote : for in these services the Hebrew is still almost exclusively used. It is desirable, however, to select a synagogue of the higher order : for, in the inferior ones, both the language and the service are often repulsive, seeming to be a discordant jargon with but little appearance of devotion.

On entering, we notice that the heads of the men, as well as of the women, are all kept covered, as in the ancient times : also that the *standing* posture is that of prayer as was the case in those former days. The eye too is caught immediately by a white garment, a simple, rectangular piece of cloth, 6 or 8 feet long by 3 or 4 wide, which each male worshipper puts on as he takes his place, and leaves behind when he retires. In the wealthier synagogues it is of silk, in others of

woolen stuff ; but it is always white, with blue stripes across at the ends ; sometimes, but not uniformly, a fringe at each end ; and, in every case, it has a number of cords a foot or so in length, of the same stuff, appended to each of the corners. In viewing this garment, we are carried, at once, into the remotest antiquity : for, these blue stripes at the end are “ the ribband of blue,” and the cords at the corners are the fringes commanded by Moses (Numbers xv, 32–41, but more especially Deut. xxii, 12) to be worn as a reminder of the penalty for transgressing the Sabbath : “ and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them.” The garment is called *Talith*, and is sometimes made to cover also the head of the persons officiating in their religious service. It is worn by the congregation mostly over the shoulders, but also in a variety of ways across the back ; and forms not an ungraceful drapery. I have seen, in a country church in Scotland, every man with his plaid across the shoulder, making a very picturesque congregation ; but although the plaid is of the same size and shape as this garment, it wants the sacred associations of the *Talith* : the latter is always white.

The language is deeply guttural ; and to my own ear, traveller as I have been among the Turks, and also the Germans, it has, as chanted in these synagogues, a familiar and very far from unmusical sound ; for it has both richness and power. Especially, at the close of the worship, when the whole assembly unite in the singing, may we have some idea of the rich music as it floated, in the old times, from the heights of Moriah in the daily sacrifices ; or from their compa-

nies to and from the festivals, as they travelled over hill and valley, singing on their way their great hymns to God.

Those ancient synagogues, and the nature of the worship offered there, in a large portion of which the whole assembly united, and also the address and instructions on those occasions, must have had a powerful influence in keeping the Jews, after the captivity, from the idolatrous tendencies so striking in the national character previous to that time.

Of education there seems to have been little in our full meaning of that word. The sons remained at home under the care of the mother until five years of age, when the father took them in charge, and taught them in the arts and the duties of life, and more especially in the Mosaic law, and all other things connected with their religion, (Deut. vi, 20-25 ; vii, 19 ; xi, 19.) For further instruction, private teachers were provided ; or they were sent to a priest or Levite, who sometimes had numbers under his care. We learn from Samuel, (1 Samuel i, 24-28,) that there was, at that time, near the tabernacle, a school for the instruction of youth ; but the instruction, except in religious matters, was very limited. Astronomy, in those days, was apt to run into astrology, which was forbidden to the Jews : a little knowledge of mathematics sufficed for their wants : the sciences, in all nations at that period, were few in number : the whole bent of the Jewish scholars was towards the study of their written and their traditional law, and the questions to which these gave rise. Their teachers enjoined on all parents to have their children taught some art or handicraft : and the Talmuds par-

ticularize many learned men who were engaged in manual labor. "What is commanded," says a Talmudic writer, "of a father towards his son? To circumcise him; to teach him the law; to teach him a trade." Their great cabalist, Rabbi Judah, "Our Holy Rabbi," as he was called, wrote, "He that teacheth not his son a trade, does the same as if he taught him to be a thief;" and Gamaliel (Saul's teacher) said; "He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced."

"There prevailed among the Hebrews no little propriety and refinement of manners. The Orientals would be thought by Europeans to be excessive in their gestures and expressions of good-will, when, in truth, they mean no more than very moderate ones among us.

"In the time of Christ, the ancient mode of addressing those who were worthy of being honored, viz., *My lord*, or words to that effect, was in a measure superseded, and the more extravagant address of Rabbi, i. e., *the great, mighty*, which originated in the schools, had become common among the people.

"The salutation between friends was an occurrence which consumed much time: for this reason it was anciently inculcated upon messengers who were sent upon business which required despatch, not to salute any one by the way, (2 Kings iv, 29; Luke x, 4.)

"The ancient Hebrew, in particular, rarely used any term of reproach more severe than those of *adversary* or *opposer*, *raca*, *contemptible*, *nabal*, *fool*; an expression which means wicked man or atheist. When anything was said which was not acceptable, the dis-

satisfied person replied, *It is enough*, (Deut. iii, 26.)

- The formula of assent was, *Thou hast said*, or *thou hast said rightly*. This is the form of expressing assent or an affirmative to this day.”*

Their dress, unchanged from century to century, was generally simple and plain. It consisted of a tunic (also worn by the Romans, as we see in their sculptures,) which was a loose garment encircling the body, with short sleeves, and reaching nearly to the knees. The Babylonians, Egyptians and Persians wore another and outer tunic of more costly material, a custom also adopted by the Jews, and referred to in Matthew x, 10 and Luke ix, 3. The tunic being loose, and bound by a girdle at the middle, made something like drapery, as we see in the ancient sculptures of Greece and Rome. The girdle was of leather, or flax, or silk, and was a hand's breadth in width. Over this was worn the *Simlah* or upper garment (the *Talith*,) simply a rectangular piece of cloth, eight or nine feet long by five or six in width, and thrown over the shoulders, or over one shoulder with the corners tied under the other, or wrapped around the body, or in any other manner that the wearer might choose. However worn, it was always a becoming drapery. Thrown over the head and held there by a fillet, as by the Arabs of the present day, it formed a protection from the sun. It was so large that burthens could be carried in it, (Exodus xii, 32 ; 2 Kings iv, 39,) and one end thrown over the shoulder in front and tied could be made a convenient receptacle or pocket, as in Luke vi, 38. At night the Hebrew wrapped himself in this simlah,

and, if travelling, his girdle unclasped and laid on a stone for a pillow, made all the preparations necessary for his repose. This is seen in those countries at the present time. So necessary was this *simlah* to the Jew that Moses enacted a law that when given as a pledge it should be returned over night. (Exodus xxii, 25, 26 ; Deut. xxiv, 13.)

These simple garments,—the drawers, tunic and *simlah*, formed the usual costume of the Jew, a convenient and appropriate one in that southern climate : in winter the legs were often bound in cloth for warmth, and cloaks were worn also as a shelter from the weather. The cloak referred to in II Tim. iv, 13, was a Roman garment worn as a protection from the rain, or on journeys. Long garments were worn by those affecting particular sanctity or wisdom. The Talmud says, "Rabbi Jochanon asked Rabbi Baruaah, what kind of garment is the inner garment of the disciple of the wise man ? It is such an one that the flesh may not be seen underneath him." The gloss is, "It is to reach to the very soles of the feet."*

White was esteemed the most appropriate color for cotton cloths, and purple for others ; black was used for common wear and particularly for mourners : on festival days, the rich and powerful robed themselves in white cotton, and the fullers had discovered a method of giving it a dazzling brilliancy, which was very highly esteemed. Scarlet was much admired. The tunics of the women were longer than those of the men, and their dress was usually of finer quality of cloth ; they always wore veils, even at home, except in the presence of servants and of those relatives with whom nup-

* Lightfoot.

tials were interdicted : their hair was also dressed differently from that of the men.

Sandals, the tunic, the simlah, a beard, sometimes a turban or covering for the head, will give us an idea of the outward appearance of the Jew of those ancient times. The face which we call *Jewish* is by no means universal : any one who will, now, look around in a Jewish synagogue of the better kind, will see many faces of our own type, which would be not at all distinguishable in the street ; and doubtless, in these remote periods, the Jewish features generally were of a superior cast, to those we commonly see now, after the long centuries, during which they have been as the Pariahs of mankind. That universal traveller, Bayard Taylor, says of the Jews, whom he met in Palestine, " The native Jewish families in Jerusalem, as well as those in other parts of Palestine, present a marked difference to the Jews of Europe and America. They possess the same physical characteristics in the dark, oblong eye, the prominent nose, the strongly marked cheek and jaw ; but in the latter these traits have become harsh and coarse. Centuries devoted to the lowest and most debasing forms of traffic, with the endurance of persecutions and contumely, have greatly changed and vulgarized the appearance of the race. But the Jews of the Holy City still retain a noble beauty, which proved to my mind their descent from the ancient princely house of Israel. The forehead is loftier, the eye larger and more frank in its expression, the nose more delicate in its prominence, and the face a purer oval. I have remarked the same distinction in the countenance of those Jewish families of Europe, whose members have devoted themselves to art or lit-

erature. Mendelsohn's was a face that must have belonged to the house of David."*

That singular addition to their costume,—the phylacteries has already been described. When a Jew wished to make a profession of unusual strictness in observing the law, he enlarged their size, so as to make them a more striking object to the public eye.

Mezzuroth was a name given by the Jews to certain pieces of parchment on which were written Deut. vi, 4-9, and Deut. xi, 13 : then the parchment rolled up was put into a case on which was written *shadai*, one of the names of God. This they attached to the outer doors of their houses, also of their chambers and to the knocker of the door on the right side. As often as they passed this, they touched the name of the Deity with a finger which they afterwards kissed.

CHAPTER VII.

FESTIVALS.

THRICE in the year, every adult male was bound to appear at Jerusalem ; namely, at the feasts of the Passover, of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles. This seems to have been a great demand on their time and means ; but religious observances were, to the Jews, no simple pastime, but the main business of life ; as their Sabbath, Sabbatical years, their tithes, sacrifi-

* "The land of the Saracen."

ces, and feasts and festivals may testify. Their whole polity was a great religious system. God was their owner as well as king. Their means, and they themselves, were his. He had a right to their first-born of children: the firstlings of their flocks had to be offered to him; so also the first of their fruits; so also the tenths of all the produce of their lands. Nay more; of the remaining nine-tenths, one-tenth was still to be taken to the temple, or to be changed into money, if the owner was too remote to offer the substance; the money to be given for religious use, (Deut. xii, 17-19, 22-29; xiv, 22-27.) There were, also, numerous other offerings which we will not stop here to particularize.

In lieu of taking the first-born child, (due to God because he had saved the first-born of Israel from the destroying angel in Egypt,) he had accepted for himself a tribe,—that of Levi,—and had set them aside for his service. Of this tribe he had then taken a portion—the distinguished family of Aaron—for the priesthood; the remainder being reserved for the other offices of the tabernacle and temple. But even then, the first born of all children had to be brought to the temple, and had to be there redeemed with money, according to the estimate of the priest, which was never to exceed five shekels (\$2,50) in amount. The first-born of cattle could not be redeemed, but had to be offered to God: so also the first-fruits of the earth.

These three journeys to Jerusalem, made each year, were not the inconvenient, laborious tasks which they may perhaps seem to us to have been. The two extremes of Palestine were only 170 of our statute

miles apart : from the most remote portions of it a good pedestrian could reach Jerusalem in about four days ; travelling, as they did, with families and cattle, this distance would take about six ; the nearer places, of course, less in proportion. Their word for feast, *מחג*, means *rejoicing* ;* and such was doubtless the feeling strongest in the heart of old and young in their families, while making preparations for such a journey, and while they were on the way.

The writer of this present work is the more able to picture to himself such a going up to their festivals from having once travelled a day and a half with companies of German pilgrims on their way to a celebrated shrine, that of Maria Zell, (the Virgin of Zell,) lying about forty miles to the southward of Vienna. The circumstances were all so peculiar and marked with the picturesque : and were so illustrative of what may have been in Judea, in those ancient times, that he will briefly describe them, speaking in the first person for the sake of convenience.

I was making a pedestrian tour through Europe, and was at this time (August, 1833,) proceeding from Trieste to Vienna. Having stopped at a wayside inn for refreshment one day, at noon, I was afterwards dozing on the porch when I was roused up by three women travellers standing there bargaining for some soup. They had great loaves of brown bread on their heads, and were soon, by such aid, engaged in making a hearty meal. I asked them where they were going, and they said, "to Maria Zell." My informant, pointing to one of the company, added, "This woman is becoming blind, and wanted to go

* From *מחג* to dance, to celebrate a feast by dancing.

there and pray, for Maria of Zell is powerful to help ; this other is quite blind already." " But surely you cannot expect her to be restored." " No, but she would not stay at home." The person speaking could see, and was their guide ; their whole journey to the shrine would occupy nine days.

On the second day after this, while travelling on, I was passed by a young man, a long staff in his hand, and going like the wind ; and he soon left me behind. In answer to my inquiry, as he lingered a minute with me, he said that he was going to Maria Zell.

That evening I crossed a small stream, and followed a winding road from it to the village of Fronleiten, on its bank, and stopped there to spend the next day, the Sabbath. At the tavern they gave me a bed in a large music room, as was often the case in the villages in Germany. Some time, during the night, it seemed as if the spirit of song was haunting the chamber and mixing itself with my dreams ; and finally the music, soft yet strong, grew so powerful that I started from my sleep. My next act was to spring from bed and to throw up a window opening upon the street. There was a spectacle below quite in unison with such dreams. The moon was about half an hour from setting, and cast a dim light on objects around. Along the middle of the street was a procession of pilgrims, in double file ; they seemed, to my glance, to be all in white ; and their rapid gait, in the dull moonlight, appeared more like the flitting of ghosts than the tread of earthly forms. As they passed they were singing a hymn to some tune that harmonized with the scene and the occasion. They soon grew in-

distinct, and their hymn floated on the night air as if spirits were singing ; and then we had again only the deserted street and the splashing of water in the fountain below.

At sunrise I was again aroused by singing from many voices in the street ; and found, on looking out, that it came from another company of pilgrims winding up from the river and entering the church. After concluding their worship, they proceeded on their way. Other processions succeeded ; and during the whole day pilgrims were passing on towards Maria Zell. I found, on inquiry, that they were from the rural districts of Styria ; that it was customary to make appointments each year, for particular districts, and that this was the year for pilgrims from that region.

I began my journey early on the following day : and as the road, since leaving Gratz, had been most of the time ascending, and was now fairly among the German Alps, the scenery on every side was marked with grand and striking features. I knew that there were pilgrims not far ahead, and by rapid walking soon joined a company of thirty-five, seated on the grass, at their morning meal. They appeared to be a family party ; and there was a venerable looking man at the head of it, by whose word they were governed, as they presently arose and formed a procession in double file. They were all provided for the journey with huge loaves of bread, which the women carried on their heads. Not long after setting out, the leader uncovered his head, and all the rest doing the same, the whole party engaged in solemn prayer ; still, however, continuing their walk. This over, the hats

were replaced and they all commenced singing a hymn. The effect was very fine. Their voices were good ; the tune was a pleasant one ; the grandest and most sublime forms of nature were all around us ; a stream was dashing by our side, mingling its sounds not inharmoniously with the singing ; and the gentle moving of the forest trees, as we passed along, seemed by the graceful motions and the soft murmurings, to intimate that nature herself was joining in the worship offered to nature's God. I looked in the faces of my companions, and read there clear signs of the sincerity of their devotions. Thus we travelled on, the whole party engaged in singing and praying alternately for more than an hour ; at the end of which time we arrived at a little chapel by the roadside, which they entered in order to commence some more formal devotions.

Here I left them ; and passing on, I soon joined a party of about 150 resting in the little town of Oflands ; and this company, being more miscellaneous, was organized more carefully than the other. They occupied much of the time, as we proceeded, in singing and prayer : a slight rain, lasting two or three hours, did not interrupt either the journey or their devotions.

They also stopped in the afternoon ; and I proceeded and joined a party of about 250, a little further on the road. Their singing, as we travelled on, had the finest effect imaginable : for the rain had now ceased ; we were quite up, among the highest parts of the Alps ; the softening influences of evening were beginning to be felt upon the scenery, and upon our feelings ; and, if to this we add that the voices were good, and the airs musical and sweet, some idea may

be formed of the evening walk, as our procession passed, winding among the mountain tops.

About sunset, we came to a small village, and stopped to rest. I walked a little to one side, so as to have a view, at leisure, of the mountain scenery : for the spot commanded a most extensive prospect ; and every Alpine height was now steeped in its own peculiar hue, running through the richest shades of blue, purple, green and yellow ; while over some floated canopies of vapor with ever-changing colors, which no human art could imitate. I soon, however, thought it best to return to my company :—but they were gone, nor could I find them anywhere. The road in each direction was in sight, for some distance ; but they were not there. I looked around, perplexed and troubled : till, at last, happening to raise my eyes, I espied them scattered thickly over an adjoining hill-side so steep that I had previously not thought of looking for them there. It is called the “Seher-berg ;” and is so steep, that, in climbing it, I often had to dig holes in the turf with my feet before trusting myself to the next step. On the way up, I passed four pilgrims at prayer, on a more level part of the ascent. When I joined the company again, which was on the summit, I found them all on their knees, in an open area among the trees. Their faces were towards their homes ; and their leader was repeating something which seemed to be half-vow, half-prayer. Suddenly they all rose, and faced in the contrary direction ; when, kneeling again, they repeated their devotions : and then, all rising, they broke, with full, strong voices, into a hymn, the cadences of which were well adapted to the scene and the time. In double file, as before, and still singing,

they descended the hill by a slope more gentle than on the opposite side ; and, at the bottom, we passed a large stone, which many of the pilgrims stepped to and kissed. We came, soon after this, to a large tavern, which the pilgrims immediately filled, as their resting place for the night. I went on to another, four miles distant ; but which I found, on arriving there, to be already filled, like the other ; I however succeeded there in getting a bed.

On the morrow I joined this latter party, and went with them towards the shrine. At the expiration of a couple of hours, a bright object, like a gilded sun on top of a steeple, shone among the trees ; and now, by a little way-side chapel, the whole company stopped for formal prayer. Soon afterwards we reached the precincts of the village Maria Zell, where my companions stopped to make their toilet at a stream crossing the road. At the church I found many others advancing on their knees through the courtyard towards the shrine.

We may, from these scenes, have probably some idea of the circumstances attending the going up to the festivals at Jerusalem, in those ancient times. The chief difficulty with the German pilgrims was in finding accommodations for the night : but in those southern countries, people, when they can, sleep, from choice, in the open air. The *simplah*, wrapped around the Jewish travellers, with the girdle folded and laid on a stone for a pillow, was all that was needed in that climate. Such was doubtless the night-rest of their patriarch Jacob, when, travelling in this same country, he saw, in his dream, the angels ascending and descending ; and so, in the morning he called his

open-air *hostelrie*, where the bright stars had shone down upon him, and heaven's vault was the dome,—a fit place for dreaming of angels—Bethel, or *the house of God*.

The object of the Jewish festivals was “to perpetuate the memory of great events ; to keep them firm in their religion by ceremonies and the majesty of divine service ; to procure them certain pleasures, and allowable times of rest ; and to renew the acquaintances, correspondence and friendship of their tribes and families, which, coming from distant towns in the country, met three times a year in the holy city.”* The periods for the festivals were : for the Passover, just when the harvest was ripening, but the gathering had not yet begun ; for Pentecost, 50 days after this, when the harvesting had been finished ; for the feast of Tabernacles, just before seeding time had commenced :—periods, consequently, when time among agriculturists could very well be spared : and the Jews were generally cultivators of the soil. Then, as regards weather, the feast of Tabernacles was about our 15th of October, before the rainy season had set in : Pentecost was at a time when not a cloud is ever seen in Palestine, but yet prior to the hot season : the Passover was on the 14th Nisan, which month corresponded to the latter part of our March and beginning of April ; and at the 14th Nisan we may consider the weather of that country to have recovered from the wintry storms, and to have become settled and clear ; for, from the middle of April to the middle of September, rains and thunders were little known.

The weather, therefore, for these journeys we may

* Calmet.

believe to have been clear, but not warm, and favorable for travelling: the time could easily be spared, and the periods came when the heart was open for rejoicing and thankfulness. We may easily imagine the members of families, male and female, including the children fit for travel (for all seem to have gone, although it was compulsory only on the adult males) starting together, joining other families from their neighborhood, or on the road;—cheerful, happy parties, and all the happier for the “pic-nic” kind of living on the way; making the journey easy, since there was no occasion for hurrying, and they were subject to little expense on the road. The morning and evening and other occasional devotions added a sacredness to the day; and the cheerfulness in other incidents of the journey had only a better zest from this devotion. Their grand and noble hymns—(and time, even to our day, has furnished no grander or more sublime hymnology)—were chanted; and often and often the full tones, in that rich Hebrew language, rose in sublime anthems in the clear air, amid the very regions of which those anthems spoke; the mountains and plains, all witnesses of God’s miraculous powers, seeming now to take a voice and to join the singers in the great anthems of praise. The cattle intended for the coming sacrifices helped to carry the offerings of the first fruits or other burdens of the travellers: the horns of the oxen were sometimes gilt;—trumpets were blown before the processions, to herald joyfully their advances towards the holy city, the temple, and the altars. The children had with them their pet lamb or kid, also decked, and sporting along, unconscious

of the death so closely awaiting it; and resting at night with the head of the child nestled against it—the animal itself still, as always before, a part of the family group. It was to be the coming sacrifice,—was thus a part of their religion itself—was to go before God accepted by Him, from and for them; and was to open their way towards paradise, and so was a sacred object even in its sportiveness: and then again, the children, while hanging around their pet, with many a secret grief at the near final parting, were told of Abraham, leading even his only son towards the same Mount Moriah to which they were travelling, and of his faith, which they could now all the better appreciate from the trial required of themselves. Thus were infused into their young hearts the lessons of their religion by practical teachings, so well understood and never to be forgotten.

But, on the whole journey, apart from the beauty of the scenery amid which the roads were laid, there were to all minds and hearts, historic lessons of strangest character and highest interest. If we suppose the festival journey to be from the northern part of Galilee, we see the travellers soon on the great plain of Esdraelon, vast in extent, and rich in beauty, on which rose the cone-shaped Tabor, with a town perched on its fortified heights. But the interest in natural beauty was sure to be mixed with grander thoughts; for there, on Tabor, had their countryman, Barak, ranged his host of 10,000 men, while Sisera, with his immense army, and his 900 chariots of iron, waited to engage the Israelites on the plain below. There had the fearless prophetess, Deborah, without whom Barak had said that he would not go

down, cried out to him, "Up, for this is the day : is not the Lord gone out before thee?" And so they had rushed down ; and the whole plain was soon covered with the flying enemy, slaughtered till not a man was left, except Sisera, who was spared to be slain by a woman's hand, because Barak had doubted God. How heartily, as the travellers passed on, did they now chant Deborah's song of victory, "Praise the Lord for the avenging of Israel"—ending with "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord."* Far to the west of them now rose grandly on the edge of the plain, and in full view, Carmel, with its history of Ahab's heathen priests, gathered there by order of Elijah ;—the altars prepared there ; the priests cutting their own flesh in frenzy, and calling on their gods in vain ; and the heavenly fire, at Elijah's prayer, descending and consuming his sacrifice, and licking up the water in the trenches around. Soon their way laid by Jezreel, with its story of Elijah's hurried arrival there with the king, after the prophets of Baal had been slain in Kishon, on the western side of Esdraelon ; and of the windows of heaven then opened in rain ; and also of Jezebel's fearful end, under the walls of Jezreel.† On their left, also, lay Endor, telling of Saul's night journey thither from the neighboring mountain of Gilboa, where his army lay encamped : and of the summons to the spirit of Samuel, and of the king's heart-rending cry to the dead prophet, "God is departed from me and heareth me no more.‡" Further to the east they could see the isolated hill of Scythopolis (Bethshean) with precipitous sides, and a castle on its summit, against the

* Judges iv & v. † 1 Kings xviii ; 2 Kings ix. ‡ 1 Sam. xxviii.

walls of which the decapitated body of Saul had been nailed by his triumphant foes.* What lessons of most powerful interest there were in all this journey to their festivals! Soon, now, towards the southern side of Esdraelon, they passed the isolated range of Gilboa, 1,300 feet high, where Saul was defeated and slain: and here, with their chanting, mingled saddest notes, as, filled with the memory of the great slaughter of their countrymen, they sang the lament of David, "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askalon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings;† for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!"‡

Their journey might lead also by Sychem and Jacob's well; and they could picture the patriarch returned once more to his native land, and finding here, for a while, his home; and here, too, looking upon the two mountains, Ebal and Gerazim, the former bare, the other fertile and beautiful, they were reminded of the strange scene of blessing and cursing in the ancient times, to each item of which all Israel gathered there said *Amen*.

Shiloh also was on their way, with its mementos of the ark resting there for 328 years: and of Samuel brought up there: and of the sudden death of Eli,

* 1 Samuel xxxi.

† Gilboa is to this day remarkable for its barrenness.

‡ 2 Samuel i.

when it was announced to him that his countrymen were routed in battle, and his children slain. Then they passed Bethel, where Jacob had his dream of the angels;—their whole journey from home to Jerusalem being, indeed, through regions where history took to them a living and speaking form.

Thus in prayer, and in singing their grand old hymns, and in pleasant intercourse, they passed on; until at last, having reached the heights of Scopus, they paused in mute admiration and joyfulness: and then, they broke out in loudest praise: for, from this elevation, they looked down over a wide scene of beauty, in the midst of which lay “the joy of the whole earth,” their own blest, sacred city,—Jerusalem.

On the road the crowds had thickened, new companies, all the while, uniting;—not as for one of our modern gatherings, but for a deeply sacred and yet a glad purpose; devotion and joy mingled harmoniously and beamed on every face; old associates were there, with cordial greetings; friends met from all parts of Palestine to strengthen the heart-bonds already formed.

Of the feasts of Tabernacles and Passover we shall have notices in a future part of this work. The ceremonies at Pentecost were brief, and we give them here as a suitable conclusion to this part of our subject. The word Pentecost signifies the 50th; and was used because this feast was on the 50th day, that is, the expiration of seven weeks from the second day of the Passover feast. The object of it was to bring the Jews to acknowledge in the sanctuary at this, the ending of their harvest, the dominion of God over the

fruits of the earth ; and also to thank him for the law given on Mount Sinai, on the 50th day after their coming out from Egypt. Assembled at Jerusalem, they formed into companies of 24 persons each, to carry their first fruits in a ceremonious manner. Each company was preceded by an ox appointed to be sacrificed, his head crowned with garlands of olive branches, his horns sometimes gilt, a player on a flute preceding him. The offering of first-fruits consisted of two loaves of wheat bread, barley, grapes, figs, olives and dates. Each man carried his basket, and the king himself was not exempt from this act. They walked in pomp to the temple, singing hymns : and, arriving there before the priests, the Levites sang the 30th Psalm. The bearers then brought their baskets before the priest, and said :

“ A Syrian ready to perish was my father ; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous,” &c. “ And now, O Lord, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me.”*

They placed the baskets beside the altar, and after prostrating themselves, were free then for the social enjoyments of the occasion.

Such was the nature of the Jewish institutions, and such their legitimate actions ;—a pleasing spectacle, where religion and social joy were combined, and each helped to give a zest to the other ; and where all life was made grand by its intimate relationship to God.

But, over this fair spectacle of ordinances and worship, and over the Jewish heart, a cloud had been

* Deut. xxvi, 4-10 : see also Numbers xxviii, 26-31.

gradually drawn ; and it was, every day, darkening more and more. It came from the substitution of forms for the essence of religion ; from assumptions and pride in their leaders, and the hypocrisy which these engender ; from the innovations by the Pharisees ; and especially from *The Unwritten Word*, (*oral traditions*) of which the Pharisees were the authors ; an instrument, which it will be readily seen, must, from its mysterious and undefined nature, have been capable of giving immense power to its possessors. The Jewish history of this very singular claimant of divine authority is thus condensed by Isaac Nordheimer D. P., Professor of oriental languages in the University of New York, drawn by him from the writings of R. Moses Ben Maimon, commonly called Maimonides,* the highest authority among the Jews :

“ All the laws given to Moses on Mount Sinai were accompanied by their interpretation ; as it is written, ‘ I will give thee tables of stone and the law and the commandments ’ (Ex. xxiv, 12). ‘ The law ’ means written law, and “ the commandments ” its interpretation, the oral law. Although this oral law was not preserved in writing, Moses taught it all to the 70 elders composing his Beth-din or tribunal. Eleazer, the priest, Phineas, his son, and Joshua, were likewise instructed by Moses, especially the latter, who was his own immediate disciple. From Joshua, who spent his whole life in teaching it, the oral law was transmitted to many of the elders of the people ; and, from them and Phineas, it was received by Eli. It then passed, successively, through the hands of Samuel and his tribunal, David and his tribunal, Abjiah the Shilonite

* He died A. D. 1205.

and his tribunal, Elijah, Elisha, Jehoiada the priest, Zechariah, Hosea, &c., &c., [the whole list is given by the Jews] to Hillel. R. Gamaliel, his son, imparted it to his son Simon, from whom it was received by his son Gamaliel, [Saul's teacher,] who was followed by his son, Simon the 3d. After him came his son R. Judah, generally called 'our holy Rabbi.' This R. Judah compiled the *Mishna*. From the death of Moses to his own age, no book had been composed for public instruction containing the oral law; but, in every generation, the chief of the tribunal, or the prophet who lived at the time, made memoranda of what he had heard from his predecessors and instructors, and communicated it, orally, to the people. In like manner, each individual committed to writing for his own use, and according to the degree of his ability, the oral laws and information he had received respecting the interpretation of the Bible, with the various decisions which have been pronounced in every age and sanctioned by the authority of the grand tribunal."

R. Judah had become fearful that the tradition might fall into oblivion, and thus, A. D. 160, wrote out the work, *Mishna* or *Second Law*, as above described. An edition of this book, published in Amsterdam 1698-1703, is in 6 vols. folio; and the vastness of the work shows us, not only how difficult (if not impossible) it was for any memory to retain it all, but also what immense means it afforded the Rabbis, by its very vastness, for imposing on the Jewish people, coming to them as these traditions did, as *the word of God*. Indeed, the oral law soon began to claim more power than the Written Word of the Pentateuch. Before we proceed to give authority for this assertion, we must speak also

of the *Gemara*, (i. e. *completion*,) called so, because in this book the oral law is completed, or fully explained. The *Gemaras* contain an exposition of the contents of the *Mishna*, and discussions on disputed points of doctrine, also historical and biographical notices, legends, disquisitions on astronomy and sympathetic medicine, aphorisms, apologues, parables, short and pithy sermons, and rules of ethics and of practical wisdom in general. There are two *Gemaras*, one called the Jerusalem *Gemara*, compiled at the city of Tiberias, about 70 years after the writing out of the *Mishna*, (or A. D. 230.) The other, the Babylonian *Gemara*, was prepared a few years later : this latter, as published in Berlin in 1715, occupies 12 folio volumes. The *Mishna* and *Gemara* form, together, what is called the *Talmud*, from the Hebrew *Lamad to learn*. The *Mishna* is divided into 6 portions : 1, on seeds and agriculture ; 2, festivals ; 3, women ; 4, laws of civil life ; 5, things holy ; and, 6, purifications. Being written out, so soon after our Saviour's time, it may be considered a fair exhibition of the excrescences which had grown upon the Jewish religion, and which Christ so often and so severely denounced. The *Talmud*, as respects its claims to authority, says : "The written law is narrow ; but the traditional is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." "The words of the scribes are lovely above the words of the law ; for the words of the law are weighty and light, but the words of the scribe are all weighty." "The Bible is like water : the *Mishna* like wine : he that hath learned the Scripture, and not the *Mishna*, is a blockhead."

The great English scholar, Dr. Lightfoot, believing

that an examination of these books might afford important information respecting the ways of those earliest times, and help us thus in the understanding of the New Testament, gave nearly all his life to this subject ; and Christian students must ever feel grateful to him for an undertaking so full of difficulties and attended with so much that was utterly wearisome and disgusting. He says, in his own quaint language, respecting the Talmuds : " The almost unconquerable difficulty of the style, the frightful roughness of the language, and the amazing emptiness and sophistry of the matters handled, do torture, vex and tire him that reads them. They do everywhere abound in trifles, in that manner as though they had no mind to be read ; with obscurities and difficulties, as though they had no mind to be understood : so that the reader hath need of patience all along to enable him to bear both trifling in sense and roughness in expression."

Speaking again of the representation of the Supreme Being in the Talmud, he says : " With regard to this fundamental doctrine of all religions, we must forbear to quote what would be offensive to the pious in perusal. Suffice it to say, that it speaks of God as the author of sin ; as needing atonement ; as contracting pollution ; as inferior to the Rabbies in knowledge : this, and more horrible blasphemies, are of common occurrence."

Surely there was great need for a Divine Teacher, and for a Deliverer to appear ! Quotations from these works will be given in another part of this book.

In searching for the origin of the abuses just detailed, we have no occasion to go very far ; for the

Scribes and Pharisees, "hypocrites," as the Saviour often declared them to be,* "making the word of God of no effect through your traditions, which ye have believed,"† readily furnish us with the clue to them all.

"*Scribe* denotes generally any man learned, and is opposed to the word rude or clownish. More particularly the word *Scribe* denotes such as being learned and of a scholastic education, addicted themselves especially to handling the pen and writing. Such were the public notaries in the Sanhedrim; registrars in the synagogues; amanuenses, who employed themselves in transcribing the law, phylacteries, short sentences to be fixed upon door-posts, wills of contract, divorces, &c. * * But, above all, the fathers of the traditions were called *Scribes*, (who were, indeed, elders of the Sanhedrim,) which is clear enough in such like expressions, 'The words of the Scribes are more lovely than the words of the law;' i. e., *traditions are better than the written law*. 'Scribes of the people' were those elders of the Sanhedrim who were not sprung from the sacerdotal or Levitical stock, but from the other tribes: the elders of the Sanhedrim, sprung from the blood of the priests, were the scribes of the clergy; the rest were scribes of the people."‡

The Pharisees, called so from the Hebrew word *Pharash*, signifying *to separate*, have been noticed in a previous chapter; and it is necessary to mention them here, only as coming before us in history, about the time when we have the first distinct notices of the traditional law. They and the Scribes were its con-

* Matt. xii, 13-33; xv, 7.

† Mark vii, 13.

‡ Lightfoot.

servators, and, doubtless, also its originators. That all the Pharisees were wicked men is not to be supposed ; for we have record of individuals of probity belonging to this sect ; but these were the few exceptions, and the character of the rest is emblazoned in our Saviour's public denunciations of them, the truth of which they did not dare to deny. It is not wonderful that such men, vainglorious and haughty, ambitious, overbearing and hypocritical, should persistently oppose the Saviour, and that he should so constantly warn the people against them and their works

There was another sect among the Jews called the Essenes, a quiet people, living by themselves, and almost entirely cultivators of the soil. Josephus speaks of them as only 4000 in number, and says, "They are Jews by birth, and seem to have a greater affection one for another than the other sects have. These Essenes reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence and the conquest over our passions to be virtue. They reject wedlock, but choose out other persons' children while they are pliable and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners."* In another part of his book, however, he intimates that some of them married, and that they were more numerous than as above described : but they do not seem to have exercised, or cared to exercise, any great influence in national affairs.

Another Jewish sect, the Herodians, were, however ambitious of such power, and stood boldly forward not only as the advocates of the Roman government, but also of principles corrupting their country-

* De bel. ii, 8, § 2.

men. They took their name, apparently, from Herod the Great, and seem to have drawn their sentiments from him, namely : 1st, That the dominion of the Romans over the Jews was just, and that it was their duty to submit; and, 2d, That in the present circumstances, they might, with a good conscience, follow many of the heathen modes and usages.* Twice the Pharisees combined with them in attempts to entrap and destroy the Messiah; and no further proof can be needed of the bitter hostility to him by the former sect than their union thus with men whose avowed principles in national affairs were so utterly hostile to their own.

We have now, through these preliminary remarks, a view of the surface of Jewish society, and of some of its internal workings; but, after all, there was a deep under current of feeling and belief which we have not reached, and cannot reach. The power of the insolent Pharisee over the masses was tremendous, backed, as it was, by the traditional law claiming to be that of God: yet the people were ever ready to break from them, and the rulers were ever fearful of such revolt by their followers. We may know from this, that in the Jewish heart was a broad substratum of right feeling, which no Pharisaic cunning could destroy. While the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, and Scribes, and Doctors, looked coldly on Christ, or sneered, or tried to destroy him, the people heard him gladly, followed him with admiration, wanted to make him a king; and, more than once, set their old doctrinal masters at defiance in their love to Christ, and their joy as they followed in

* Prideaux—see Calmet.

his train. Where the general heart was so moved by him, there must have been much good and right feeling in it, notwithstanding the corrupting influences which their leaders had long and hypocritically exercised over the land.

The Jews had never been a popular people among other nations, and they could not be. Exclusive, antagonistic to all other religions; repelling all intercourse as adapted to bring heathenism among them; believing themselves to be a nation chosen of God from all the inhabitants of the earth, and favored of Him, they shut their hearts against all other people in that *adversus omnes alios hostile odium, hatred amounting to hostility against all others*, described by Tacitus (Hist. Lib. v, 5,) and were regarded by other nations in return with hatred mixed with contempt. "Credat Judeus"—*let a Jew believe it*, expresses Horace's contemptuous opinion of their credulity. Their literature, even their poetry, was scarcely known beyond themselves; yet their poetry was the most sublime extant, and even to our day it has not been excelled. Their prophetic writing rises to a grandeur of sentiment and language without a parallel; and the father of Grecian critics on style, Longinus, quotes the opening of the first chapter of Genesis as the highest known specimen of the sublime. While Pharisaism and the heavy curse of the *traditional* religion were like a crushing weight upon the land, there must have been a mighty power in the original Jewish faith to keep religion alive at all under such a malicious influence. Alive it was; and now springing up once more with vigor at that cry from the Jordan, "The kingdom of heaven is at

hand," with the subsequent declaration, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

CHAPTER VIII.

PRESENT JEWISH VIEW OF THAT PERIOD.

These preliminaries in the last three chapters will enable us to take a comprehensive view of the circumstances attending the public ministry of Christ : but the reader would probably be gratified by seeing how those matters are regarded by the present Jews themselves. We, therefore, make an extract from a recent work, "A general history of the Jews," by one of their own people, Jost ; considered by them as the most profound historian of the age. It was written in German, and portions have been translated by Rev. James Murdaugh, D. D. ; from which we make our quotation. Its deeply interesting character will render unnecessary any apology for its length, or for inserting it here in the text instead of a note.

Jost says :

"Herod the Great tore in pieces all the framework of society, and gave it a new construction. Under him the people so visibly lost their national peculiarities, that they seemed ready to become ex-

ting. Trodden down and oppressed by a tyrannical government, they turned their eyes towards the Holy Scriptures and their law, for comfort and consolation. They acknowledged themselves justly punished for their backsliding ; and although the sanctuary and the sacrifices continued, yet every one could see that a priesthood, which the king conferred on whom he pleased, and of whose incumbents he had deposed four and slain two, and a sanctuary which the king beautified merely as a permanent temple, the sanctity of which he was no way concerned to maintain, could by no means satisfy the requisitions of God's government, and of the Judaism resulting from it. Besides, the national tribunals were disregarded, and the king alone enacted laws and appointed tribunals, on every occasion, according to his pleasure. The people had no protection, and they were harassed with acts of individual violence ; some were carried away by ambition, others by self-interest ; some acted from compulsion, others from bigotry and hypocrisy. What would be the result of such a state of things, was a question which interested every friend of the public weal ; and it was answered variously. *One party* adhered to the doctrine of Judaism, and looked for deliverance by a regent of the house of David ; *another party* were for waging war with everything of a foreign character ; and a third party declared the kingdom of God to be at hand, in the way of a general repentance and reformation.

" 1. The first party connected themselves with the doctors of the law, and adhered to their schools. At the head of these schools, during the whole reign of Herod, stood two men entirely disconnected with

political life, who devoted their time to the study and exposition of the doctrines of the law ; namely, Hillel of Babylonia, renowned for the mildness of his disposition, his kindness and calmness, and Shammai, a man bold, vehement and decisive. Both were distinguished for learning, and both framed systems of Judaism, though they frequently clashed in regard to their legal conclusions on particular points. And hence their schools were afterwards opposed to each other, and were characterized, that of Hillel for adhering more to the sense and import of Scripture, and that of Shammai for a rigid adherence to the letter. Both these men mingled so little in the transactions of their times, that they became mythical personages. Only some particular sayings, characteristic of each, have come down to us. Thus Hillel inculcated as the fundamental principle of Judaism, this maxim : *Love thy neighbor as thyself*. On the necessity of an early prosecution of knowledge, with his accustomed brevity, he said : *Unless I for myself, who will ? If I only for myself, what do I become ? If not now, then when ?* On the nothingness of the world, compared with spiritual life, he said : *The more flesh, the more worms ; the more wealth, the more care ; the more wives, the more poisoning ; the more maid-servants, the more unchastity ; the more men-servants, the more thieving,—but the more knowledge, the more life ; the more reflection, the more intelligence ; the more benevolence, the more union. Gaining a good name is a good thing ; but a knowledge of the law procures immortality.* Respecting union he said : *Separate not yourselves from the many. Do not account yourself safe until your dying day : and judge not your neighbor until you stand*

in his place. From Shammai we have only a few sayings. *Make the study of the law the business of your life. Say little and do much. Be beforehand with every one.* Yet the virtues of the man are particularly eulogized. By the influence of these two men, Rabbinism, or the authoritativeness of the teachers of the law, became predominant; Sadduceeism was nearly extinguished, and the interest of students in the application of the doctrines and precepts of the law to human conduct was amazingly shackled. By the Rabbis of after ages, Hillel was honored as being next to Ezra, the restorer of the law. (Succa 1, end.) To him in particular, has been ascribed the distribution of the whole law into six parts: 1, of seeds; 2, of women; 3, of festivals; 4, of possessions and property; 5, of sacred things; 6, of things clean and unclean; a distribution which has been permanently maintained. Under these six titles are arranged all that Judaism teaches respecting the law; and the whole, collectively, has since been called MISHNA, (Deuterosis) or the second rescension of the law. Yet all instruction was, at that time, given orally. Hence, though many persons understood the law, yet there were few who had talents for teaching. Possibly the *Semicha*, or the consecration of public teachers by the imposition of hands, which their principal doctors practiced, originated in this period. For not long afterwards, the learned were always called *Rabbis*; which word became a title, and was an object of ambition. The introduction of such a mode of investiture greatly increased the power of the Rabbis, or rather established it on a firm basis. Rabbinism directed its aims against paganism, and the dominion of the senses in common people. To all

who intrenched themselves in this bulwark, the civil government became a matter of indifference, because it did not secure the proper object. From that period, the adherents to Rabbinism have had a world of their own, in which they lived, and for which they died. We may also remark that the Rabbis, for a number of centuries, continued their labors to bring Judaism to perfection. The men who took the lead in the work, set out with a very good idea, namely, to give to Judaism an enduring shell or covering that should defend it against all the storms to which it might be exposed. But many of their followers embraced only the shell, and sought for salvation in outward observances, in much prayer and fasting, in strenuously combatting the slightest deviation from very trivial prescriptions; and thus, either they were altogether in error respecting the kernel of doctrine, or they put on an apparent sanctity as a cloak to conceal their moral conduct. The majority were enthusiasts in the proper sense of the term, and lived only in an ideal world.

"2. On the other hand, there was at that time a *large party* who contemplated a full restoration of the Jewish commonwealth, and who overrated their own power. During the whole period of Herod's reign it showed itself openly. *Judas* and *Matthias*, two respectable doctors, heated their scholars into insurrection. Representing the king's sickness as a punishment from heaven, they advised to the destruction of his unlawful works, among which was accounted the golden eagle, emblematic of the Roman dominion, placed over the great door of the temple. The spirited youth, giddy with the thought of a glorious conflict with the

vast power of the Romans, hastened to the temple and tore down the eagle. Herod, who then lay sick at Jericho, caused 40 of the perpetrators, with their leaders, to be apprehended ; and he summoned the principal Jews before him. The two authors, and the most active perpetrators in the deed, were consigned to the flames. *Matthias*, the high-priest, was deposed ; and his brother-in-law, *Joazar*, put in his place. Thus the insurrection was checked, but the spirit of it was not extinguished. It was rather strengthened by the danger incurred. Scarcely was Herod dead, when the love of freedom everywhere awoke. *Sabinus*, a Roman captain serving under Varus, the president of Syria, quartered a Roman legion in the castle of Jerusalem, and commenced an arbitrary course, which inflamed the opposition still more. On the next feast of weeks, the friends of liberty flocked to Jerusalem; and the conflict soon commenced. Arrows, javelins and stones, from every quarter, flew through the city. A part of the cloisters of the temple were set on fire by the Romans, and many Jews lost their lives either in the flames or amidst the ruins. *Sabinus* was forthwith besieged in the castle, until some of the leaders of Herod's party joined him. About the same time, *Judas*, the son of one *Ezekias*, slain by Herod, took possession of the natural fortress *Sepphoris*. *Simon*, a former slave of Herod, a man of fine form and of great bodily strength, placed a garrison in the fortress of Jericho ; but he was soon after seized and put to death. Another, whose name was *Athronges*, with a large retinue commanded by his four brothers, set up a military government at Emmaus, slew the Romans and Herodians there, and sustained himself for

several years. *Varus* at length appeared, with two legions, and a body of Arabians and Phenecians, and, vanquishing the insurgents almost everywhere, he marched into Jerusalem. About 2,000 persons were crucified, and many were sold into slavery. Much property was lost by fire and plundering. Yet the insurgent party remained secretly in arms. They bore the name of *Zealots*, i. e., passionate for liberty ; and they caused the ruin of their country.

“ 3d. *A third party* was actuated by totally different views. In the interpretation put upon the law by the first party, they could see only a tissue of external sanctity ; and in the zeal of the second party, only a useless effort, that must draw after it the loss of what little union remained in Judea. Far from both, many, especially among the more plain, common people who had no thirst for distinction, and no solicitude to maintain the fallen commonwealth, hoped for deliverance from the fluctuating state of things, and particularly from the evils of immorality, in accordance with the generally proclaimed oracles of the prophets. There can be no doubt that this expectation of a kingdom of God which should arise out of Judaism, and be a very different thing from what others anticipated, was very prevalent, especially among the later Essenes. They preferred a still and quiet life of devotion, and served the public chiefly as peaceful counsellors, and revered wise men. The spirit alone, the divine, the all sin-subduing spirit, could put an end to their calamities ; burst the fetters of the law on the one hand, and of worldly-mindedness on the other, and, by his truth, bring not only the Jews, but all the Gentile world, to an internal

tranquillity ; which their religious, in combination with worldly, power or oppression, could not secure. These views, more or less matured, pervaded and animated a very considerable number of Jews, who waited only for the manifestation of God, in order to see the work of redemption in successful operation. Their aspirations for it increased as the calamities multiplied. That such views were liable to abuse resulted from the nature of the human mind. There arose one *Theudas*, who gave out that he was himself the Deliverer ; so also one *Simon*, called the Sorcerer, shortly after this period. They, however, disappeared and effected nothing. On the contrary, agreeably to the Christian doctrine (which the Jews flatly contradict,) true deliverance was wrought by that JESUS, who was born, of Mary at Nazareth, in the very year of Herod's death ; in whom were perceived, at the time of his birth, all the indications of the future MESSIAS, or the *Anointed*, the *Christ*. With his entrance into the world, the Christian doctrine, or the belief in a Redeemer already come, began to be more general among the class of Jews just described. Subsequently they found their expectations fully answered ; and thus, though remaining outwardly Jews, they were in spirit separate from them. Up to this time they were a constituent part of the Jewish community ; and in them the ground of various agitations or rather embarrassments, may be traced. The opposition between Judaism and Christianity first became manifest after the founder of Christianity had finished his earthly course. Though his life, in itself considered, makes no conspicuous part of the Jewish history, we notice it here for the

sake of marking the principal points of the above-mentioned self-evolving opposition, which in subsequent times becomes of importance in the history of the Jews ; but we pass no judgment on the numberless different expositions of the existing narrations and traditions, because it would lead us into the province of theological controversies. Recognizing the sinfulness of men by nature as a fundamental principle, the Jews anxiously desired to find an atonement for sin. This was symbolized by sacrifices and by baptism. *John*, surnamed the Baptist, born a little prior to Jesus, and also destined to a high calling, travelled up and down the wilderness, like the ancient prophets, proclaiming, " The kingdom of heaven draws near." Kindly greeting all who resorted to him, he baptized many in the Jordan, and preached repentance as a preparation for the coming of Christ ; whom, moreover, he recognized in the person of *Jesus of Nazareth*. Jesus also, honoring the national custom, received consecration from him. Exciting high expectations in his childhood, and astonishing people by his wisdom in discourse with the doctors of the law when twelve years old, he, at the age of about thirty, entered on his course as a public teacher. In Galilee his discourses had an overpowering influence ; and soon his triumphant superiority, in reasoning with the Pharisees and Sadducees in their own way, procured him general esteem and veneration. The mentally diseased, often, from mere internal conflicts, exposed to exquisite pain, found relief by him ; and other sufferings he was able to alleviate by his healing word. After various miracles, which were beheld with amazement, but which did not so penetrate

the soul as did his instructions. Jesus announced his vocation as the *Christ*, the Anointed One, the Saviour of the world, the Son of God, and, in general, as the person foretold by the prophets under various attributes ; and, of course, also as a *king*, yet not over an earthly realm, but over the spiritual world, which was to be new created. His friends, who were in some uncertainty respecting his mysterious character, were at length brought gradually to the conviction that he was the Deity himself, manifested in a human form. The Pharisees, who were advocates of the enlarged oral law, and especially of the expected glorious appearing at some time of a restorer of the commonwealth, saw in his denial of the holiness and atoning efficacy of certain precepts of the law, and in the announcement of his grand position, that redemption is to be sought for in a renovation of the soul, an entire prostration of their own system of doctrine. Although no one of the renowned doctors of Judaism encountered him in debate, yet he had to answer a great many captious questions, and often to hear his doctrine branded as heresy. This occurred especially at Jerusalem, where his adversaries took occasion, from certain expressions, to accuse him of treason, which the civil relations of the country easily offered the means of doing. A Sanhedrim, assembled under the Romish governor, Pontius Pilate, found him guilty ; and Pilate, contrary to his own convictions, yielding to the urgency of the excited people, ordered him to be crucified. But the execution of the Sanhedrim's sentence had an effect very different from that contemplated. The headlong procedure, in disregard of the usual forms of justice, strengthened

and united his followers. They saw in the transaction, not merely the execution of an innocent person, but a conspiracy against the Deity, with which he was filled, and by whose spirit actuated, he, for the salvation of all, gave up his body to torture and contumely. From the period of Christ's crucifixion, his followers ceased to be Jews, and, of course, pass out of the province of our history, into that of the church of Christ. The Jews themselves did not at the time view this transaction so important as they must afterwards have found it to be."

CHAPTER IX.

GALILEE—CANA.

Except in the declarations of John, and the outward stamp which inward greatness gives to features and manner, the Messiah had little impressiveness in his appearance at the Jordan, and he did not seek for any such effect. *Example, Teacher, Redeemer* : these were to constitute the purposes of his appearance on the earth, and they could best be effected in quietude, and in avoidance of large public demonstrations : even among men, the greatness which is for eternity, is seldom the greatness which shines amid crowds ; but rather is seen most in little things, endures trials well, and is always and everywhere the same.

There was, indeed, a striking simplicity in the man-

ner, in which, on the day following John's public announcement, a few followers gathered around the Messiah ;—all in great contrast with the scenes previously about John,—the prophetic cry, the deputation, the crowds, and the baptisms, exciting wonder and curiosity. What had been the effect of John's first announcement we do not know ; but it brought no disciples to Christ : and we may suppose that it created disappointment among men, whose expectations of the Messiah had been so erroneous and so extravagant as to earthly power. Was this—they thought—this he who was to rescue them from the Roman dominion, and to build up the mightiest kingdom ever known upon earth—to flash over all the world his own glory and that of the Jewish name ? Was this the Christ !

And yet, the glory of his kingdom has remained, while that of Rome itself has sunk into nothingness ; and it will forever remain. But man is blind.

On the day following this annunciation, John made a second one to his disciples, as Jesus was passing by, " Behold the Lamb of God ! " and two of them left the Baptist to follow Christ. One of them, Andrew, finding his brother, expressed his new joy, " We have found the Messiah," and he brought him to Jesus. The salutation from the latter might well surprise all who heard it, " Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas " (the Aramaic for stone.) What could be the meaning of the address to this man,—frank, quick, impulsive, and unstable ? was it to be a reminder of what he was to aim at,—firmness of character and stability, in order to supply what was wanting among his really generous traits ?—So the spectators might well revolve in their minds about

Simon, as now they watched the proceedings of Christ with increasing interest.

On the following day, the Messiah called another disciple, Philip, with the simple injunction, "Follow me : " he was from Bethsaida, the same Galilean town from which came Simon and Andrew. About seven miles northward from Nazareth, the place of Christ's bringing up, was the town of Cana ; and a true, good man, Nathaniel by name, " an Israelite without guile," had come from that place to the gathering at the Jordan. An individual of such uprightness and singleness in character would be longing for the salvation of Israel ; and would be agitated by the reports circulating on every side : and we may believe him to have been on that day, in private prayer, asking humbly of God for manifestations of the long-promised Deliverer. Philip met him, and at once became an Evangelist for Christ ;—an office in which that disciple was, afterwards, so distinguished. He cried to Nathaniel :

" We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph."

" Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth : " was the quick reply of the startled man ; for the reputation of Nazareth seems to have been bad.

" Come and see," said Philip ; and Nathaniel went. A few words from Christ, showing an intimate knowledge of the individual thus brought before him, convinced the doubter, and he cried :

" Rabbi, thou art the Son of God : thou art the king of Israel."

What a greatness of joy must have indeed been in the man's true heart, to bring out such an exclamation as that : and the joy rose to its fullest height, when

the Messiah, after a few words more, declared to him, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

The Messiah now returned from this place to Galilee.

It is always delightful to accompany him to that region, where there was altogether a different moral atmosphere from that of Judea;—a people mostly of simple habits, kind, genial in feeling, open to his teachings and ready to respond with warm gratitude to his benevolent acts. Judea, on the other hand, with greater refinement, and with more celebrated schools, was distinguished for pride, bigotry, captiousness, and insolence in its higher ranks: while the people there were down-trodden by the rulers, and were a mere abject race. These, however, are only general characteristics; for there were exceptions in both districts, as we shall presently see. For a good account of Galilee, we will resort to an author of that day, who knew well the nature of its brave people; having, when he wrote about them, just raised there at the commencement of the war against the Romans an army of more than 100,000 men.* He says:

"Those two Galilees, [upper and lower, but essentially one] of so great largeness, and encompassed with so many nations of foreigners, have always been able to make a strong resistance on all occasions of war; for the Galileans are inured to war from their infancy, and have been always very numerous, nor hath the country been ever destitute of men of courage, or wanted a numerous set of them; for their soil is uni-

* Jos. De Bello II, 20, § 6.

versally rich and fruitful, and full of the plantations of trees of all sorts, insomuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation, by its fruitfulness ; accordingly it is cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle. Moreover, the cities lie very thick, and the very many villages which are here, are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants. In short, if any one will suppose that Galilee is inferior to Perea in magnitude, he will be obliged to prefer it before it in its strength ; for this is all capable of cultivation and is everywhere fruitful.”*

We may remark here that, of the twelve apostles, eight were known to have been from Galilee ; as were also, probably, the other four, except Judas, whose surname Iscariot from Carioth or Kerioth (Joshua xv, 25) seems to point him out as originally from a town in Judea.

Five disciples or followers,—not yet formally appointed as apostles, that is, commissioned to preach,—were now with him ; wondering, observant, communing among themselves about all they had seen and heard ; respectful, but yet in their minds full of queries ; for the way before them seemed doubtful, both as respected their leader and themselves. He had given them no proof of his high commission ; and John’s announcements, although clear and decisive, were yet but the words of one who had himself performed no miracles, and had received no endorsement before the world of his own claims ; whose words were, according to his own declarations, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “ Prepare ye the way.”

* Jos. De Bello III, 8, § 2.

As the disciples went on thus through Galilee, watchful and querying, reports were also spreading there concerning the proceedings at the Jordan, and John's declarations : and now, here before the Galileans, was the individual announced by the Baptist to be the Messiah.—But he was so quiet in manner, so gentle and unassuming, so undemonstrative in power ; who, people asked in wonder, who, in reality, or what was he ? The question remained still unanswered, although repeatedly put ; and a most deeply interesting question it was to all. Yet, amid the queryings, there was a winningness about him that had gained the hearts of his followers : a mysterious Presence too, an undeveloped something undefinable to their puzzled perceptions, but impressing them with reverence.—How would it end ? They followed, and waited, with many agitating thoughts in their minds, and many strange feelings in their hearts.

On the third day after they had left Bethabara there was a marriage in Cana, Nathanael's birth-place, and Christ, his mother and disciples, were invited guests. Curiosity, fed by widely-spreading rumors respecting him, was increasing, and becoming intense. His actions were closely watched, his words weighed, his looks were scrutinized. What demonstrations would he make, were he the Messiah ? How would he proclaim himself ? How show his power ? When would the glory of his kingdom begin ?—Or had John misjudged him, and misled the multitude ? Thus among the company present there were fluctuating opinions, questions, with much wondering, and a close observation of all that was done and said. The mother of Jesus knew all the greatness that

lay unseen in his quietude of manner ; the disciples were expectant ; curiosity among all was deeply blended with that cheerfulness of the marriage scene. Such feasts among the Jews usually lasted seven or eight days ; and the wine, on this occasion, gave out while the Messiah was there. Let not any one accustomed to see or hear of excesses in our country, form an opinion from them of such occasions among the Jews. What was termed emphatically “good wine” among the ancients was that which *was destitute of spirit* :* and Horace and Plutarch both inform us that the best wines were those which were powerless ; the saluberrimum vinum, *most wholesome wine*, being such as had not been adulterated with any additions to the *must*, or simple juice of the grape.

While intense curiosity respecting the Messiah was almost acting as a check on the cheerfulness of the feast, this lack of the usual beverage was threatening to complete the interruption ; and the mother of Christ announced to him the fact. We can imagine her feelings of anxiety ; and, with her belief in his greatness, a desire that he should satisfy others by making some powerful demonstration of himself. Therefore, although his answer to her was adapted to qualify such a desire, she directed the servants to execute any wish that he might express. For the disciples themselves, called to follow him, and now wondering, observant, and querying in their minds, an exercise of miraculous power would be well-timed ; and the occasion suggested its character. He ordered the servants to fill with water some vessels standing by, and then to draw from them and to carry to the

* See Pliny, lib. iv, chap. 13.

ruler of the feast. The *water had become wine* ; and the ruler, on its being presented, called the bridegroom, and charged him with breach of the rule on such occasions, by keeping the "good wine" to the last.

Our feelings are drawn powerfully towards the Messiah by this scene at the marriage feast ;—his mingling with those assembled on the cheerful occasion ; his unwillingness to have the joyfulness of the company damped or destroyed ; his ready yielding to the suggestions to a kind act, which removed an awkward dilemma in the house ; and even the descending from the higher dignity of usual miraculous acts for an occasion so small as this ;—showing that, in his supreme greatness of nature, he considered nothing little which could add to the happiness of others.

The effect of the miracle on his disciples was good ; for we are told that it acted as a confirmation of their faith.

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPLE.

AFTER these events at Cana, Jesus, with his mother and disciples, proceeded to Capernaum, on the lake of Galilee ; but they remained there only a few days, for the Passover was approaching, and it was accord-

ing to their law that he should spend it at Jerusalem.

With every mention of that city, connected with those ancient times, comes up a vision of the great temple, the central object of the Jews' affections throughout the world. The very stones that formed it were precious in their eyes. In distant lands, the theme to their wondering children was the former glory that rested abidingly on Mount Moriah ; the presence of God seen and felt there ; the Urim and Thummim, the Ark, the bright cloud upon the mercy seat, the spirit of prophecy ;—all connected with the first temple which Solomon had built, and had dedicated with sacrifices of sheep and oxen "that could not be told nor numbered for multitude," and with prayers ; while in "the holy place" within, "the priest could not stand to minister," "for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." That temple had long since been destroyed by the enemy's hand ; but its splendor, and its honor from heaven, were yet a living remembrance in the hearts of all the Jews.

Then had come the second temple, built by Nehemiah, far inferior to the other,—the foundations laid while the old men among them who had seen the glory of the first, "wept with a loud voice," as they remembered it ; and the younger were shouting with joy at the prospect of restoring the former worship ; "so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people : for the people shouted with a loud shout and the noise was heard afar off."*

* Ezra iii. 12, 13.

Such were the grand and the tender associations connected with this sacred spot. It had, also, other deeply interesting associations ; for Moriah was supposed to be the place where Abraham erected the altar for offering his son ; and it was certainly there that David interceded for his people, and built an altar at the time when the destroying angel was scattering pestilence over Israel,* because the monarch had numbered his people, trusting in them rather than in God.

This second temple being unsuited to the grandeur of the purposes for which it had been erected, and having also become ruinous from age, Herod the Great determined to pull it down and to erect a larger one ; and, finally, he succeeded in placing before the Jewish people that great "Mountain of the House," as they termed it, vaster in size, and more magnificent in its architectural claims, than was the case even in Solomon's temple itself.

Mount Moriah is a short, rocky ridge, 318 yards wide, running north and south ; having on the east the deep valley of Jehoshaphat, separating it from the Mount of Olives, and on the west a shallower valley, called the Tyropean, (also valley of the Cheesemon-gers,) 350 feet across,† immediately beyond which rose the heights of Zion, lined with its battle-mented walls. Solomon had, by means of a wall built up on the eastern side, and, perhaps, also across the southern part, of this ridge, and by filling up, formed a platform for his temple : but Herod faced each side of Moriah with a wall, forming a rectangular substructure suited to the temple with which its

* 2 Sam. xxiv, 25.

† Robinson.

heights were to be crowned. In some places near the foundations, the stones yet remain in their original places ; and some of them measure twenty and a half, twenty-four and a half, and even thirty feet in length. They are of the white limestone of that region ; and their faces being raised about six inches from the edge of the stone, so as to look like raised panel work, a plain wall would thus have a rich architectural effect. These walls being carried to an elevation which, though doubtless less than that given by Josephus—four or five hundred feet—was still considerable, the inclosed space was filled up with arched ways and earth ; and thus, at a proper height, a platform was made for their sacred purposes. Let the reader now imagine these outside walls to be carried still higher, so as to enclose this platform as in a court, and to be battlemented. This court, according to Josephus, was 625 feet square,* and was paved with marble of various colors ; and against the wall all around, was a cloister or covered space, the roof of which was of carved and ornamented wood-work, the columns supporting it of marble, each column a single stone. These cloisters or corridors were very grand, a fitting frame-work for the more sacred spots within. In southern countries, where people live much in the open air, covered places for general re-

* He says a furlong square, and, doubtless, meant the Roman furlong, equal to 625 feet of our measure ; recent careful measurements by Williams (the Holy City, by Rev. George Williams, M. A.) of what seems to be the remains of this wall, give, for the east wall, 1520 feet ; south, 940 ; west, 1617, and north 1020 feet. It is difficult to know whether the cubit, in Josephus, meant the Roman, equal to eighteen inches, or the Jewish cubit, equal to twenty-one inches of our measure.

sort are a great convenience, and the pillared spaces around the Grecian temples were for such a purpose as well as for ornament. The Greeks, however, finding these insufficient, soon began to erect what were called Stoaë—inclosed courts, with paved corridors, and had many of them. The Stoic sect of philosophers received that name because Zeno, their teacher delivered his lectures in one of these resorts, the Stoa Poecile. The Romans had also numerous stoaë, sometimes private ones, connected with their city palaces or their villas. In southern Europe, especially in Italy, archways or corridors, bordering their streets or public squares, are common ; and the writer of this has seen, even at Quito, on the Andes, three sides of the main plaza thus provided with what was not only ornamental, but of great use to the people of that city.

These corridors at the “Mountain of the House” at Jerusalem, were of unusual depth and magnificence. On the north, and east and west, they were formed by triple rows of columns, including the one against the wall ; the columns were 6 feet in diameter and 27 in height, with Corinthian capitals and “a double spiral at the basis.”* The rows of columns were 30 feet apart, the whole height of the cloister 50 feet, and above it, at the outer edge, were the battlements of the wall. The ceiling was ornamented with “deep sculptures in wood, representing many sorts of figures.” The southern corridor, was on a still grander scale ; for here were four rows of columns, the outer and inner rows being as on the other sides, but the two middle ranges of columns having

* Josephus.

twice the height of the others and the width here 45 instead of 30 feet. It is estimated that there were altogether 337 of these monolithic columns in the corridors: Herod's architecture was truly on a magnificent scale. If we consider the extent and depth of these corridors, it will be seen that their architectural effect must have been very grand.

But all this was only the frame-work for the more sacred portions lying within. There were eight gateways on this platform: one on the north; one (the principal one) on the east; two on the south; and four on the west, one of the latter opening on a stone bridge crossing the Tyropeon, and of sufficient height to connect the temple immediately with Mount Zion. A visitor entering by one of these gateways,—say the eastern one,—would have before him this grand spectacle of the court paved with marble, and surrounded by its triple or quadruple ranges of columns: and also immediately in his front, a little to the north of the centre of the court, a mass of structures of a different kind. The former was called the Court of the Gentiles, and was, with its surrounding corridors, open to all nations: the other structures, which we will now describe, were exclusively for persons of the Jewish faith.

There was, first, a platform of 170 cubits front, and running westwardly 335 cubits,* ascended to, on all sides, by 14 steps; on the edge of the uppermost of these steps, a balustrade of open stone-work 3 cubits high and elegantly wrought: in this balustrade, at

* This is from Josephus: query, Roman cubits; each 18 in.? or Jewish cubits each 21.8 inches? as he was writing for the Romans, probably the former.

short intervals, pillars with inscriptions in Greek and Roman letters, declaring that "no foreigner should go within that sanctuary." Within the balustrade was a level space 10 cubits wide, called "the Chel," and vacant, except that, towards its western end, the council room of the Sanhedrim, built partly on the more sacred ground of the temple court, was there extended so as to embrace also the Chel. Not only were foreigners excluded from these boundaries, but the sight of all within them was prevented by a wall 40 cubits high, running all around, along the inner border of the Chel. The Gentile in the court without might hear the voices of the chanters, and see the smoke of sacrifices ascending from the great altar, but even his vision might not profane the holy places, except so far as it could be indulged through the large gateways, of which there were nine, four on each side, and one at the east opening through this wall. These gateways were large, and were covered over with silver and gold: but the one at the east, called "The Beautiful Gate,"* was the most magnificent of all. It was of Corinthian brass, and 50 cubits in height: its doors were 40 cubits high, and were "adorned after a most costly manner, as having much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold upon them than the others. These nine gates had that silver and gold poured upon them by Alexander, father of Tiberius."† Additional steps led up from the Chel to this magnificent gateway; and, passing through it, the visitor would find himself then in what was called "The women's court," an area 135 cubits square, and surrounded by corridors, supported by columns as in the larger court

* See Acts iii, 2.

† Jos. De Bel. v. 5. § 3.

without. Private passageways at the entrance gave the women access to their separate place, probably above the corridors: for, although this was called the "Court of the women," it was frequented by the other sex as much as by them. It was the place for that most extraordinary scene of dancing, which we shall notice, by and by, in describing the Feast of Tabernacles.

It had four gates, one on each side;—the Beautiful gate on the east; and opposite to it, on the west, a large and very rich one called Nicanor. This last was reached by an ascent of 15 steps from the women's court, and gave admittance to the higher platform and court, called "The Court of Israel," sometimes termed simply "The Court." This was 135 cubits from north to south, and 187 from east to west, with columns and corridor as in the other courts. But the reader must not suppose this area to be all plain, as in the women's court; for here was the great altar, and beyond it the temple itself. Standing at its eastern gate of entrance, Nicanor, (it had three others on each side,) the visitor would see before him, at 11 cubits distance, a low wall, running across the court, and separating him from the "Court of the Priests:" beyond that, at 11 cubits, the great altar, 24 cubits square and 10 in height, with an inclined plane of ascent on its southern side. Then, beyond the altar, was the Temple.

This last stood on a platform the highest of them all. Its porch or entrance 100 cubits wide, and of the same height, was reached in front and at its two ends, by 12 steps commencing not far from the altar and formed in pairs, 3 cubits between each pair. Josephus says: "The outward face of the temple, in its

front, wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's minds or their eyes ; for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But the temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow ; for as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white. On its top it had spikes with sharp points, to prevent any pollution of it by birds sitting upon it. Of its stones, some of them were forty-five cubits [67 feet] in length, five in height and six in breadth.* It was of such as these that the disciples said to Christ, " Master see what manner of stones and buildings are here : " as if such solidity might set at defiance all common human events. Indeed, every part of the Mountain of the House combined great massiveness with richness of decoration, and often with elegance. The front of the temple was pierced by an immense open entrance 70 cubits high and 25 cubits broad, of which Josephus says, " This gate had no doors ; for it represented the universal visibility of heaven, and that it cannot be excluded from any place. " It seems to have been an arched way 16 feet in depth (the thickness of the front) with sides highly enriched with architectural devices ; and in this opening was trailed the celebrated vine of beaten gold, the clusters to which were 5 or 6 feet in length.† Of this

* Bel. v, 5, § 6.

† Josephus De Bel. v, 5, § 4. Tacitus says, " But because their [Jewish] priests when they play on the pipe and timbrels, wear

vine, the Talmud says, "For men would be offering, some gold to make a leaf, some a grape, some a bunch; and these were hung upon it, and so it was increasing continually."* Tacitus calls the building *immense opulentiae templum*.†

This was only the porch of the temple, which, narrower than the porch, extended back at right angles to it; so that the whole structure was in a form like this . Back of this lofty arched way, was another 55 cubits high, and 16 wide; and then were folding doors 20 cubits high and each 5 cubits wide, giving admittance towards the body of the temple; next to these a veil; in the rear of this, folding doors similar to the last. The outer pair were commonly called by the Jews "the great door of the temple" because it had "a great front;" and, of this, we have the record that, "the morning sacrifice was never killed till this door was opened;" and that "he that was to slay the sacrifice, killed him not till he heard the noise of the great gate opening."

None but the priests could pass these doors: and they, entering, would find themselves now in "the Holy Place," a room 40 cubits long, 20 wide, and 60 in height: "the floor planked with fir-boards and then gilt with gold:" the walls and ceiling of cedar, both gilt likewise: the walls carved into branches and open flowers to the height of 50 cubits; above which were windows admitting light. In this room were

ivy around their head, and a golden vine has been found in their temple, some have thought that they worshiped our father Bacchus, the conqueror of the east; whereas the ceremonies of the Jews do not at all agree with those of Bacchus."

* Lightfoot.

† De Jud. lib. v, cap. 8.

the 7-branched golden candlestick, $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high ; the table of show-bread, 2 cubits long by 1 in breadth ; and the altar of incense, a cubit square and 2 cubits in height.

Beyond these, at the end of this room, hung a veil ; and, a cubit further on, a second veil, this second the one spoken of by Josephus and others as " the veil of the temple." This latter was the one rent at the time of our Saviour's death. No one might lift these veils and pass beyond except the High Priest alone.

The room to which this gave admittance, " The Holy of Holies," was 20 cubits square and as many in height, and was gilt throughout,—the floor, as well as the walls and ceiling ; the walls also enriched with precious stones. " In this there was nothing at all. It was inaccessible and inviolable, and not to be seen by any ; and was called the Holy of Holies."

Attached to each side of this main building, which was 100 cubits in height, were three stories of small chambers for temple purposes : a similar set, two stories in height, being also at the western end. The central, or main building, rose considerably above all these. The walls in these edifices were of great thickness (five or six cubits) and solidity, as was requisite in a country subject to earthquakes. The porch extended fifteen cubits on each side beyond the main building and its attached chambers : the steps leading up to it have been described as in pairs, three cubits between each pair ; and on these successive platforms, or " degrees of steps," the priests stood when they sounded the trumpets, and also when, accompanied by other instrumental music, they chanted the psalms.

Women were admitted beyond their own court,

only when they brought sacrifices : the Jewish men might come into the court of Israel : they, and the women also, were allowed to pass the low boundary inclosing the court of priests, when they came to touch the sacrifices they were about to offer on the great altar within that court.

What a contrast to those temple scenes in the ancient times ;—the old worship, the innumerable sacrifices, the rejoicing crowds at the festivals, the priest, the rabbi, the lordly Pharisee ;—to all this, what a contrast, now, in the scenes among the Jews at Jerusalem, to which city they yet come, often from far distant lands, to pray, and mourn, and to die. At the south-western angle of the old wall of the Mountain of the House, are several courses of stones in their original position ; among them a portion of an arch of the bridge leading from the temple across the Tyropeon. It is a retired spot, and here the Jews may be very frequently seen, with their lips at the joints between the stones, praying, so that their breath in supplication may pass in towards the sacred ground. No one but a Mahomedan is allowed to enter on the paved court above, once the temple precincts ; but the hearts of the Israelites still warm with affection towards their holy place ; and, when they die, their bodies are carried across the Kedron, and buried on the lowest slopes of the Mount of Olives, where the shadows of Moriah may, as the sun declines, be cast across their graves. They believe, also, that in this valley of Jehoshaphat will be the final scene of the judgment-day : and that those who rise there will have peculiar advantages.

Extensive vaults of masonry have been, for some

years, known to exist under the southern end of the *Haram*, as the Turkish enclosure occupying the site of the Temple courts and Temple, is now called, but quite recent explorations have brought to our knowledge many still more interesting facts respecting excavations below those grounds ; among them, a reservoir, 736 feet in circumference and 42 in depth, estimated to have a capacity of two millions of gallons, supplied in ancient times by the aqueducts from Solomon's pools, seven miles distant, towards the south. The discoveries, "tend to show that, by a series of subterranean tunnels and valves, its abundant waters could be used at will for flushing the cess-pools and sewers connected with the temple, and carrying off all the blood and filth as the Talmud informs us, down to the bottom of the Kedron."

In the great Mosque of Omar, in the *Haram*, is a rock of ruddy limestone, projecting above its floor, and regarded with great veneration by the Turks. It is irregular in form, nearly sixty feet in its greatest diameter, and rises five feet above the marble floor.

It is supposed to be the spot of Abraham's altar, and to have been under the great altar of the ancient temple. At its south-east corner is a door, leading down to an excavated chamber about fifteen feet square and eight in height. The rock overhead is pierced with a hole three feet in diameter : and directly beneath this, in the floor of the chamber, is another hole, with a pit beneath, called by the Turks the Well of Spirits, of unknown depth.

A channel runs northward to this sacred rock from the great cistern above described, enters the Well of Spirits, then passes on northward, 120 feet, to a large

double cistern, hewn in the rock. From thence a tunnel descends eastward, is joined by an aqueduct from the great tank at the northern side of the Haram area, and appears to descend towards the Kedron. The Mishna says, "Beneath the altar was a cave whereby blood and filth were conveyed down into the Kedron valley ; and the gardeners there paid as much as purchased a trespass-offering for the right to use it for fertilizing their gardens."

These explorations have been made chiefly by M. Pierotti, formerly engineer in the Sardinian service, but more recently employed by the Pacha of Jerusalem. They are imperfect, and, doubtless, much yet remains to be discovered.

Vast subterranean chambers, recently discovered under the part of Jerusalem called Acra, will be noticed in a future part of this work.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TEMPLE CLEANSED—NICODEMUS.

FROM Capernaum the Messiah had proceeded to Jerusalem, to be present at the Passover ; and having arrived there, he went up into the temple. It was to the Jews the greatest of all their celebrations in the reminiscences it awakened, and was, in parts of it, a very solemn, in other parts of it a very joyful festival. The Jews came to it from all parts of

the world ; and the numbers congregated at Jerusalem were calculated on one occasion, for a statistical report to be sent to the Roman emperor, and were estimated at two millions seven hundred thousand.*

The reader who has perused the foregoing chapter, and has in his mind the grandeur of this Mountain of the House, the courts, the altars, and temple, would now imagine a scene suited to the place and the solemnities. But there was one far different—a scene of desecration of the sacred spot, of filth, of barter and sale, and of the unholy passions which the love of money begets. In order to understand it fully, we must follow Lightfoot in some details.

“There were thirteen treasure-chests at the temple, which by the Jews were called *Shoperoth*, which signifies properly trumpets, because, trumpet-like, they were wide at the bottom and narrow at the top, that money put in might not easily be got out. Two were for the half-shekel, that every Israelite had to pay for the redemption of his soul or life, for which the law is given Exodus xxi, 30 : one chest for the payment of the last year, if he had missed to pay it at the due time ; and the other for the half-shekel for the present. On the first day of Adar [the month preceding Passover month,] which answers to our February, there was a general notice given throughout the country that they should provide to pay the half-shekel ; and on the 15th of that month the collectors sat in every city to gather it ; and they had two chests before them, as were at the temple ; and they demanded the payment calmly, and used no roughness or compulsion. On the 25th day of the month the collectors

* See Josephus De Bel. vi, 9, § 3.

began to sit in the temple, and then they forced men to pay ; and if any one had not wherewith to pay, they took his pawn, and sometimes would take his raiment perforce. They had a table before them to count and change the money upon.

“ A man that brought a shekel to change and must have half a shekel again, the collector was to have some profit upon the change, and that addition was called *Colbon*. * * The Talmud and other authors discourse largely about this colbon, and who was to pay it, and who to be quit from it, and how much to be paid, and to like purpose ; but the general conclusion is still for some profit, which exaction was that which caused our Saviour to overthrow the tables of the Colbonists (John ii, 15 ; Matt. xxi, 12 ;) for these receivers began to sit in the temple for that purpose but eighteen or twenty days before the Passover, and continued for that time when the concourse of people was greatest, and after it was over and done.

“ And so the market that was in the temple, the sheep and oxen, it is like, were not constantly there, but for such times of concourse, when the multitude of people and sacrifices were so exceedingly great ; though, indeed, there was merchandizing of other things there all the year, in the tabernae or shops that we have spoken of [in the Court of the Gentiles, just inside the eastern gate.] The place where the marketing of the sheep and oxen was, was the great space of the Mountain of the House [Court of Gentiles] that lay on the south side of the courts ; for on the west and north the rock was too straight for such matter ; and on the east was the most common en-

trance of the people, and these cattle would have stopped up the way.

“These collectors of the pole-tax (half-shekel) probably sat about the east gate, Shushan, as being the chiefest entrance.”*

There were, besides those enumerated, money-chests for eleven other distinct kinds of collections, all in the temple courts; and these last remained throughout the year.

What a scene there was, therefore,—not for a day, but continuously through their feasts,—in that large court belonging to the temple! In addition to the lambs for the Passover supper, there were many thousands of sheep and oxen slain at this festival. They were brought up here for sale; and on every side chaffering was going on: and, instead of devotion, the worst feelings of the human heart were brought into exercise. From the great altar within the more sacred enclosure rose up the smoke of the sacrifices; but the voice of the trumpeter and chanters there was mixed with or drowned by the sounds without,—the tramp and lowing of cattle, the angry, sharp words of buying and selling among those demonstrative people, the loud, stern demands of the Colbonists or collectors requiring the half-shekel, often from the poverty-stricken or reluctant, from whom their garments were taken by force when the money was not paid.

Such was the view presented, as the Messiah and his disciples, having reached the city, went up to the courts of the temple, and stood there for a moment or two to look around. Was he himself an object of

attention by the throngs? Doubtless, for the disciples would have told, along the way and among the crowds in the city, who it was they were accompanying; and John's annunciation must have been reported over the land. He was now here: he who had been called by the prophet at the Jordan—"The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" and for whom John had declared that he himself was not fit to take the lowest of a menial's offices. People saw him going up to the temple, and followed: they saw him glance and take in all that scene of outrage and desecration of the place: saw a change pass over him, described in the words of David—"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." How grand his countenance was as the emotions spread over it; and no wonder all yielded before him in his subsequent, immediate act. "Make not my Father's house," he said, "a house of merchandize." The cords lying about supplied him with a scourge: but more potent still was the moral effect in a wide consciousness among the multitudes that one was among them invested with a mysterious authority greater than man's; and in the conviction also that all this scene throughout the courts had been an offence against God. What assistance willing hands may have given we know not, but the temple was cleared by him of its traffickers and cattle, and the tables of the money changers were overturned, and the money scattered upon the pavement. The place was cleansed of its pollution received from the low passions of men.

It was a bold and daring act; for the simple toleration of this abuse of the temple courts, directly

under the eye of the Sanhedrim, might be considered as equivalent to giving it their official sanction ; and we may well believe that, among the angry traffickers hurrying away and the enraged Colbonists, many an eye was turned towards the council-house projecting on to the Chel, with an appeal to the rulers to interfere. Indeed, the money-changers might consider themselves outraged while performing an act having, to some extent, the approbation of their laws ; and, all who did not look underneath the surface of these old usages, and see the low, bad passions which they engendered, and the corrupting influences emanating from this sacred place, must have gazed with mixed feelings on the act. But only one feeling they could have, while looking at the principal actor, and noting the lofty moral sentiment expressed in his eyes and face, and the firmness and determination there, the full consciousness also of right, and that power of Presence which the right always gives, and gave more particularly on this occasion. There was power there, a strange, mysterious power, which had made all give way before him, as if intuitively feeling that the Master, greater than their Rabbis, was in the courts.—Still the multitudes looked towards the Sanhedrim room with much earnest curiosity as to the effect which these proceedings would have on that assembly.

The rulers must have gazed with excited feelings on that scene in the courts,—the hurried departure of the traders, the confusion and anger of the money-changers, the evidence that the better feelings of the multitude there were with Christ ; and with perhaps also a latent conviction that the abuses of the temple courts had become disgraceful and needed a correcting hand.

But they did not wish to see *this* hand applied for the correction ; for enmities towards the Messiah were, in their hearts, already taking strength. They had heard, —they could not but have heard,—of John's annunciation respecting him as the Christ ; and the feelings towards John, and all connected with him, had the rancor resulting from his denunciations against themselves, Pharisees and Scribes, as a brood of vipers. All other intelligence respecting the Messiah, showed this latter to be one leading on in a course far different from theirs ; no scholastic state, no lordliness of manner, no assumptions, and yet with power strangely mixed with his humility of life. They had been accustomed to see men set themselves up as leaders of new religious sects or political companies, especially of late, and to find them soon disappear : but here was one who had been so wonderfully heralded ; who made no pretensions as a leader, except to draw around him a few very humble men ; and who yet, in humility, had the marks of indefinable greatness, which, while it puzzled, also impressed and overawed. They saw it all exhibited that day in the temple courts ; the act itself seeming to be an undignified one ; and yet showing a loftiness of religious feeling, and also power ; and having moreover the true dignity of that which causes reverence for God and his services to be paramount among men.

Eighteen years previously, this same individual, then a lad of twelve years of age, had stood in that Sanhedrim room, perplexing the Rabbis by his questions, and showing a wisdom far superior to his years. Now he appeared there differently, heralded as the Christ by one whom the people all believed to be a

prophet. What should the rulers believe? How could they accept as the Messiah, one so different from all their anticipations? If he were the Christ, what would become of all their hopes of an universal Jewish dominion, and of supreme rank and power for themselves, these rulers? But yet, what was he, so strangely invested with such greatness here before their eyes, and with such a Presence?

Such thoughts pass rapidly through men's minds when in an excited state; and to these rulers they were inconclusive. But they would demand some proof of his authority; and, therefore, presenting themselves, they asked,

“What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”

He answered in figurative language (a common mode of speech in that country) signifying that the sign should be by his resurrection; and, mistaking his language, they replied, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days.”

They seem to have been baffled in their inquiries, suggested, doubtless, by no friendly spirit; while the Messiah himself did not wish there to enter into controversy with these excited men. But one of their number, Nicodemus by name, was apparently a man seeking earnestly after truth; for he soon afterwards sought a private interview. He came by night.

Why by night? It may be that he thought his visit would have fewer interruptions at that hour; but the motive was apparently a less commendable one,—that fear which makes many an individual now shrink from being known to be an inquirer respect-

ing Christ. He appears to have been a man of many amiable qualities, but overcome by moral timidity; and so he remained, till after the crucifixion, amid the heart-rending scenes of which event all other feeling was lost in the greatness of his love; and then, from the humility of his utter prostration in spirit, he rose up erect in manly, Christian strength.

It was a most interesting occasion, when the two sat facing each other in that night scene, by the dim light of the lamp; the ruler, with his earnest looks fixed on Christ; feeling himself to be in the presence of one invested with divine authority; reverent, yet hesitating; shrinking, awed, yet won; the Messiah reading all his heart and mind, not approving, and yet pitying and gentle. The ruler began:

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

The answer seems to have plunged at once into Nicodemus' case, and with emphasis:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." You must have the new birth, which will make another being of you; will change your very soul, and make you decided for the truth, whithersoever your convictions may lead you, whether before the Sanhedrim or before kings, for my sake.

That was always the clear teaching of Christ to his disciples. He began it here, before Nicodemus, the Pharisee and ruler, coming by night:—the new birth changing a man and making him a new creature, one fully Christ's, and ready to acknowledge him, by day and by night, before the world, as well

as in the secret heart. No wonder that it was thrown directly at Nicodemus, without introduction, except the emphatic *verily*, as he sat there, in that place to which he had come under cover of the night, probably afraid to act as his conscience told him to do. "You must be a new man, born again, a brave and open follower, before rulers and before the world, ere you can be fit to be acknowledged by me."

The *heroism* of Christianity, moral and physical, is one of its most prominent characteristics. The very entrance into the new life is with that principle infused into the whole being; not forming the new life, but one of its attendants. That strongest trial which man or woman can endure, tending to lift us up into the highest nobility of being, must be borne at once. The Messiah himself took the lead in such heroism, there in Jerusalem; now, in the humility, when he could have avoided it, and afterwards on the cross. In this address to Nicodemus, he refers to his own coming death by violence: "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life:" and then he spoke of the love of God, and of its action, in a sentence containing a whole body of divinity in itself: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The word "new-birth" was not a strange one to Jewish ears. "If any man become a proselyte, he is like a child new-born." "The Gentile that is made a proselyte, and a servant that is made free, behold,

he is like a man new-born,"* are words from their ancient Rabbis ; but it was a new doctrine to be urged upon one already a Jew ; and Nicodemus received it with expressions of surprise.

The Messiah, after this, remained a short time in Judea, during which his disciples were administering the new ordinance of baptism to the multitudes offering themselves. Reports were quickly carried to the Pharisees that the number even exceeded those who were resorting to John ;† and the disciples of the latter hearing a similar rumor, hurried to their Master with a complaint that " all men came unto him." John stopped complaints quickly by declaring that the Messiah " must increase, but he must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven is above all. * * He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him."‡

But the career of the Baptist himself was approaching towards its close. He had been preaching and administering the new ordinance for about a year and a half, when he was seized by the soldiers of Herod Antipas, in whose district he was, and was hurried off to the castle of Macherus, situated towards the southern end of Perea, and not far from the eastern borders of the Dead Sea. His voice, which had rung out so boldly against all wicked men, while it was also gentle and kind to the penitent, had now given unpardonable offence in the royal household itself.

* See Lightfoot, *in loco*. † John iv, 1, 2. ‡ John iii, 26-36.

The implacable, deadly hate of a woman had been aroused.

Herod, in one of his journeys, had become enamored of Herodias, wife of his brother Philip; and although she was his niece, he persuaded her to leave her husband and form a new connexion with himself. John fearlessly denounced the libertine act, and so brought upon himself the wrath of the king, and the vengeance of the still more vindictive paramour. Herod, doubtless, gave out the report, such as we have seen in a former chapter as stated by Josephus; but the result to John, a year and a half after this, fully verifies the Scripture account.

We accompany the bold, brave man to his place of confinement: we see him, whose life had always been so free and untrammelled, shut up, and wearing away his energies in the chafings in the prison-house: we watch him, day after day, wondering whether relief would not come; whether the tyrant would not relent; whether the Divine power would not interpose, and we find him still a prisoner there, till his heart was weary and sick in the hope deferred.

CHAPTER XII.

IN SAMARIA AND GALILEE.

From Jerusalem, the Messiah and his disciples returned to Galilee, taking the shorter way through Samaria. After travelling on, about 30 miles, through a

country, which, in their case, gave rise to no recorded incident, the road descended into a plain about 12 miles in length, crossed midway along, at right angles, by a valley running east and west. The intersection of the plain and valley is an interesting spot: for, at this place, is a deep well, identified, beyond doubt, as the one dug by Jacob, when, on his return from his eventful journey into Mesopotamia, he stopped here for some time, and purchased a piece of ground from Hamon, the father of Shechem. To this spot also the embalmed body of Joseph (and probably the bodies of his brethren) was brought from Egypt for interment. Here, immediately on the west of the plain, are Mounts Gerazim and Ebal, each about 800 feet in height, their rocky, precipitous sides being separated by the narrow valley alluded to: and beyond them, where the valley expands into a spot of exceeding beauty and fertility, lies the city of Nabulus, the Shechem or Sychar of the ancient times: it is about a mile and a half from Jacob's well, but seems formerly to have approached nearer to it than at present.

The Messiah, wearied with his journey, sat down by the side of the well, while the disciples went to Shechem to purchase food; and a woman coming to draw water, he asked her to give him drink. Her reply had reference to the usual violent antipathy of the Jews towards the Samaritans: but the result of the interview was a gathering about him of the people from the city, and his staying with them two days.

The old partition wall broken down! It was indeed a strange scene in Samaria, to see a Jew eat, drink and sleep in their houses: for, as we have already remarked, what a Samaritan ate as food became,

from that fact, as swine's flesh in the eyes of the Jew : no Samaritan might be made a proselyte ; and no one of them could by any possibility attain, in Jewish estimation, to eternal life. Still more surprising to the Samaritans was it to hear of his declaration to the woman that " the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, [Gerazim,] nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father ;" for " the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him." The disciples followed him ; their old feelings shocked, wondering at the strange proceedings among the Samaritans, but deterred by reverence from questioning their Master. To Peter it must have been especially puzzling ; for, even after three years of Christ's teachings, it required a miracle to reconcile that apostle to a hearty fellowship with Gentiles ; and Samaritans were regarded as even worse than these last. When they left Shechem the inhabitants declared, " We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."*

In Galilee, to which he now proceeded, reports concerning him were spreading rapidly : for people from all that region had been to the Passover ; and they were telling, everywhere, what they had seen and heard at Jerusalem. Among that simple, agricultural people, accustomed to regard with reverence everything belonging to their religious metropolis, the news was astounding :—and deepest interest, wonder, hopes, doubts, agitations of all kinds, met Christ and his disciples, and were depicted on people's countenances wherever he went. An added rumor now gave in-

* John iv, 4-42.

tensity to this interest ; for it was asserted that, in Samaria, he had declared himself to be the Messiah, the Christ.* The claim, astonishing as it was to every one, took force, as people gazed and listened ; for he began immediately to preach in their synagogues, and it was evident to their apprehensions that there was something most extraordinary in his words and looks. He "had returned in the power of the Spirit:" and if, in after times, the face of Stephen was "as it had been the face of an angel," as, filled with the Holy Ghost, he spoke before the council of Jerusalem, what must have been the sight here, as Christ preached in these synagogues, his countenance lighted up with the Divine expressions, his eyes gleaming in the supernatural afflatus, his doctrines sublime though clear, his manner having the stamp of authority, while at the same time it was winning and gentle! The result might well be, as we are told in the Scripture that it was, "He was glorified of all."†

Proceeding thus onward, he came again to Cana, the scene of the marriage feast.—There a man hurried into his presence :—what a look there was in the man's eyes,—entreaty, hope, anxiety—all that would be in a father's face, when a son was sick—near to death—and here was, perhaps, relief! He was a nobleman of Capernaum, about 18 miles distant : he had heard that Christ had returned from Judea to Galilee, and had hastened to him, and his beseeching cry was "to come down and heal his son." His entreaty seemed to be warded off :

"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."—

* See John iv, 26.

† Luke iv, 14-15.

—"Sir, come down ere my child die."

"Go thy way, thy son liveth."

—The man must have sprung to his feet with joy ; for he believed. He hurried homeward ; and was met on the road by his servants come to inform him that his son was alive, and that the fever had left him. On inquiry it was known, that the relief came when the healing words were pronounced at Cana : and the father "believed and his whole house."*

CHAPTER XIII.

AT NAZARETH.

THERE was, just after this, a scene at Nazareth, very far different from this last ;—violent passions among the inhabitants, railing, personal violence upon the Messiah, and an attempt to put him to death. Yet Nazareth was the place where he had been brought up ; and where all his characteristics of greatness of character combined with amiableness must have been well known. Such traits, however, often only provoke hostility among people of an opposite kind : and the exclamation of Nathanael at the Jordan, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" shows us what was the reputation of this place.

No portions of Palestine are so grand in general features, or so interesting in detail, as those immediately surrounding Nazareth, and in view from the

* See John iv, 46-53.

adjoining heights. The town lies imbedded in a range of hills running east and west, forming the northern boundary of the plain of Esdraelon, which spreads out, immense in extent, yet with scenery varied in every part. The eastern edge of this plain may be said to rest on the Jordan, along which it extends north and south about twenty-four miles : Carmel, running north-west and south-east, forms its other boundary. But only the extreme western extremity, eighteen miles north and south, and fifteen miles east and west, is level ; the eastern portion having, towards its southern end, Gilboa, 1850 feet in height, running parallel with Carmel ; and just north of that, the Little Hermon, 1300 feet high ; and then again, connected with a spur running out from the Nazareth hills, the otherwise isolated, cone-shaped Mount Tabor, 1800 feet in height. The foot of Tabor is about six miles from Nazareth.

This town is reached by a short valley running up from the plain, and rests on the western side of a recess, a mile in length by half a mile in width. It contains now about 3000 inhabitants, probably about the same number as in the Saviour's time. Thompson says, "The valley is certainly small, but then the different swellings of the surrounding hills give the idea of repose and protection."* Among the hills are precipitous rocky bluffs, adjoining the town.

Robinson, who was by no means given to enthusiasm in his descriptions, thus speaks of the prospect from the hill immediately back of Nazareth, the summit of which is 1100 feet above the sea ;—a spot to which, doubtless, the Saviour had often withdrawn

* "The Land and the Book."

for enjoyment and reflection, while his earthly life was growing up in that grandeur which harmonized so well with this scene. That traveller says: "I walked out alone to the top of the hill over Nazareth, where stands the neglected Wely of Neby Isma'il. Here, quite unexpectedly, a glorious prospect opened on the view. The air was perfectly clear and serene; and I shall never forget the impression I received, as the enchanting panorama burst suddenly upon me. There lay the magnificent plain of Esdraelon, or, at least, all its western part; on the left was seen the round top of Tabor over the intervening hills, with portions of the Little Hermon and Gilboa, and the opposite mountains of Samaria, from Jenin westward to the lower hills extending towards Carmel. Then came the long line of Carmel itself, with the convent of Elias on its northern end, and Haifa on the shore at its foot. In the west lay the Mediterranean gleaming in the morning sun; seen first far off in the south on the left of Carmel; then intercepted by that mountain, and again appearing on its right, so as to include the whole bay of 'Akka, and the coast stretching far north to a point N. 10° W. 'Akka itself (Ptolemais, now St. Jean d'Acre) was not visible, being hidden by intervening hills. Below, on the north, was spread out another of the beautiful plains of northern Palestine, called el-Buttauf; it runs from east to west, and its waters are drained off westward, through a narrower valley, to the Kishon (el-Mukatta,) at the base of Carmel. On the southern border of the plain the eye rested on a large village, near the foot of an isolated hill, with a ruined castle on the top; this was Sefuriah, the ancient Sepphoris or Dio

Cæserea. Beyond the plain el-Buttauf, long ridges, running from east to west, rise, one higher than another, until the mountains of Safed overtop them all, on which that place is seen—‘a city set upon a hill.’ Further towards the right is a sea of hills and mountains, backed by the higher ones beyond the Lake of Tiberias, and in the north-east by the majestic Hermon, with its icy crown. * * I remained for some hours upon this spot, lost in contemplation of the wide prospect, and of the events connected with the scenes around. In the village below, the Saviour of the world had passed his childhood ; and although we have few particulars of his life, yet there are certain features of nature which meet our eyes now just as they once met his.”*

Among such scenes Jesus had lived, doubtless in far more hearty communion with them than with his townsmen of Nazareth. He might now look for a more favorable reception of his teachings in any other part of Galilee than in this place ; for, even if its people had been of a better description of character than they were, still the jealousies felt towards one who had grown up among them with no advantages of education or position, and who yet had suddenly become distinguished by fame, and was asserting such remarkable claims, would predispose them to regard him with suspicion if not with hostility. The rumors that had been brought to them were startling ; —the proclamation of John, the scenes at Jerusalem, the miracles, his teachings in the synagogues ; there was in all this something to shake their prejudices and to puzzle and perplex them ; but they argued,

"Are not his parents here with us ; his brothers and sisters ?" Prejudice still had rule ; and the very greatness of his claims made the barriers to their belief in him the stronger. When the citizens of Nazareth heard, therefore, that he had come among them, and was about to proclaim his doctrines in their synagogues, there was a great agitation in the community ;—anger, disdain, envy, and, probably, old dislikes, the more bitter from the consciousness that they were unmerited,—all this mixing with the intense curiosity which was in every one's heart. One thing they felt might possibly satisfy them, namely, a miracle ; and they might feel that they had a higher claim to miracles than Cana, or even Jerusalem itself. Report had told them of wonders performed in both these places ; perhaps they would witness similar, or even greater things, in Nazareth. So they hoped. Candor and fair judgment could not be expected among such a people ; and a teacher given to expedencies would have avoided, in this preaching in their synagogue, what would be offensive to them ; any prominence to the high claims of being the Messiah, and any allusion to their desire for a miracle to gratify curiosity. But Christ was not given to consult expedencies rather than the truth.

People had hurried to the synagogue. At the proper time in its services he stood up to read ; and the book of Isaiah being handed to him he turned to the passage—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering

of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

It was a well-known prophecy referring to the Messiah ; and often, through the long years since Isaiah's time, had the Jews fed themselves with glorious hopes from these words and those immediately following.—He closed the book and handed it back to the minister, and sat down,—the posture of speakers.—What a breathless silence there was in that assembly ! He broke it by saying :

"This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."—

—It was a re-assertion of that which they understood he had claimed, now made directly before them : but hostility was for the present repressed ; for there was something in his look and manner that made astonishment keep other feelings in check ; a strange Presence that gave authority to his words.

By Presence is meant that something undefinable which has impressiveness in any company where a person of reputation and worth is felt to be ;—in this case heightened by "the power of the Spirit" acting in conjunction with his earnestness and his inward greatness making manifestation of itself in his countenance. The people of Nazareth whispered to each other, "Is not this Joseph's son?" and the question would express not only astonishment, but, among many, rage also at his claims. There was a mixed feeling, and it would soon show itself among these demonstrative people. He saw their feelings, and gave them a warning ; for he now began to speak again, and, as he did so, silence fell on the assembly.

"Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physi-

cian, heal thyself! whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thy country."

—Their hopes were high, their curiosity now most intense :—Was he going to perform a miracle there? But he always reprobated idle curiosity, and especially that which would desecrate the miracle-working power for its gratification. So now he gave the reproof.—They were wound up to the highest expectancy—and he spoke, "Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land: but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, [a heathen place] and unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them were cleansed save Naaman, the Syrian [a heathen]."—

—There was a storm of rage. Every angry feeling in them was roused at this intimation that the heathen might be preferred before them. They rushed upon the speaker; and forgetting all else than what they considered so gross an insult to their nation and themselves, they hurried him out of their town to a near precipice, bent on hurling him over. But their rage was futile. The super-human power was now exerted; "he passed through the midst of them and went his way," leaving them to subdue, as they might, their impotent wrath.

He came thence to Capernaum; and now he made that city his home—such a home, at least as his frequent journeys and labors would admit: for his time

on earth was not to be one of quiet enjoyment, but of self-denial, and of labor wherever the good of others should require.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAKE OF GALILEE.—CAPERNAUM.

How gem-like, amid its beautiful environments, even in our day, is the Lake of Galilee! but how much more beautiful in those ancient times! Its immediate surroundings are sufficiently marked with what is grand in nature to give it something of that character; but it is chiefly remarkable for a gentle, quiet, lasting beauty, which never tires; for this has every variety of form, and changes at every hour of the day. Every one who reads appreciatingly the Gospels, feels that he must love this lake on account of its associations: but it is a place very lovely in itself, and in the natural surroundings with which it is enriched.

The approach to it is thus described by Dr. Olin, one of the most graphic writers of travels in the Holy Land. He had been travelling, all the day, over the plain of Esdraelon, which, after leaving Mount Tabor, may be said to continue (though with a more undulating surface) in a northeasterly direction quite to the lake. Towards evening he came to a level spot of great fertility, and under cultivation, the thick

grass on its waste places sprinkled over with flowers : and he says, " My attention had been so fully occupied with this scene of loveliness, and these unusual tokens of industry and cultivation, always the more striking from being rare, as not to have heeded our progress, until we reached the eastern border of the plain. We were now upon the brow of what must appear to the spectator, at its base, a lofty mountain which bounds the deep basin of the sea of Galilee, and forms the last step in the descent from the very elevated plain over which we had been journeying during the long day. The sun had just set behind us in a blaze of red light, which filled the western sky for many degrees above the horizon, and was slightly reflected from the smooth glassy surface of the beautiful lake, whose opposite shore was visible many miles on the right and left, rising abruptly out of the water into an immense and continuous bulwark, several hundred feet in height, grand and massive but softened by graceful undulations, and covered with a carpet of luxuriant vegetation from the summit quite down to the water's edge. Beyond the lake, stretched out a vast, and to our eye, a boundless region, filled up with a countless number of beautiful, rounded hills, all clad in verdure, which, at this moment, was invested with a peculiar richness of coloring. In the remote distance, though full in our view, the snowy top of Mount Hermon was still glittering and basking in the beams of the sun, while a chaste, cool drapery of white, fleecy clouds hung around its base. The green, graceful form of Mount Tabor was behind us, while, on the broad and well-cultivated plain, the numerous fields of wheat, now of a dark luxuri-

ent green, contrasted very strongly and strangely with intervening tracts of ploughed ground. Independently of sacred associations, this was altogether a scene of rare and unique beauty, nay, of splendid magnificence.”*

Dr. Clarke, the English traveller, says, “It may be described as longer and finer than any of the Cumberland lakes.”

It is in shape an irregular oval, 14 miles in length by 9 at its greatest breadth, the water of great transparency and 165 feet in depth. On its eastern side the mountains rise abruptly, but with green, sloping sides ; and great billows of such hills pass to the east, as far as the sight reaches, green but uninhabited, as seems to have been the case also in the ancient times. On the southwest, the mountain sides are in successive off-sets like huge terraces ; and there, four miles from the southern end of the lake, is Tiberias, once a place of some eminence for its hot baths and schools, now decayed and almost in ruins from earthquakes of recent date. Passing northwardly from Tiberias along the western border of the lake, we come, at the distance of three miles, to Mejdél, the ancient Magdala ; and, soon afterwards, to a spot where the mountains sweep backward for a short space, and leave room for the rich plain of Gennesaret. Beyond this plain, northwardly, the hills bordering the lake have more gentle upward slopes, and are five or six hundred feet in height.

Capernaum, the home of the Messiah, at intervals, for more than two years, was probably at the northern end of the plain of Gennesaret ; and we will

* Olin's travels.

therefore give this place more particular attention, which, indeed, from its own richness and beauty it very well deserves.

The plain lies at the spot where the lake is widest, and a little north of mid-distance on its western shore. It is nearly triangular in shape, about three miles in length by a mile and a half in its greatest width; is perfectly level and only a few feet above the water. It is a place of surpassing fertility. In those eastern countries, wherever water can be procured for irrigation, the vegetation is most exuberant; and even the sandy shore at Jaffa, seemingly pure silex, is changed by artificial watering, into richly-productive gardens; but at Gennesaret the soil, a dark loam, is itself of the greatest natural richness, while four very large fountains afford water that, in ancient times, was carried by artificial channels all over the plain. On its south west side is what is now called the "Round Fountain," inclosed by a low, circular wall, 100 feet in diameter, the water about two feet deep, and beautifully limpid and sweet, bubbling up and flowing out rapidly in a large stream to water the plain below. Ten minutes' travel northwardly from this conducts to another very copious stream, coming down through a break in the mountain; and at the northern end of the plain we have another large fountain, gushing out from beneath the rocks, while around this, near the celebrated Khan Minyah, other smaller fountains are clustered. Close by this last spot, the mountain comes back again to the lake, and sends a short promontory out into its waters; but a fountain a mile further north, still larger than any of the former, and strong enough to turn several mills as it bursts from

the rocks, had its waters conveyed by artificial channels to the plain of Gennesaret, about which they were distributed by similar means. The abundant supply of water, the natural fertility of the soil, the depth of the plain, 622 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and with a hotter climate consequently than the table-land above, together with the adjoining lake, make this spot a very choice one, in Galilee, and it had a wide reputation in ancient times. Josephus says of it : " The country also that lies over against this lake hath the same name of Gennesaret ; its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty. Its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants, accordingly, plant all sorts of trees there ; for the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts ; particularly walnuts, which require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty ; there are palm trees also, which grow best in hot air ; fig trees also, and olives, grow near them, which yet require an air that is more temperate. One may call this place the ambition of nature, where it forces those plants that are naturally enemies to one another to agree together : it is a happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them laid claim to this country ; for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal fruits beyond men's expectations, but preserves them a great while. It supplies men with the principal fruits—with grapes and figs continually—during ten months in the year, and the rest of the fruits, as they become ripe together, through the whole year ; for besides the good temperature of the

air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain.”* Some travellers suppose Capernaum to have been three miles further to the north, but the weight of evidence seems to place it by the group of fountains on the plain itself, at its northern end. It was certainly about this portion of the lake shore; and we may believe that the beautiful sheet of water and its environments harmonized well with the feelings of Christ, who so often drew the illustrations to his teachings from the scenes of nature, and said of the flowers covering these very hills, “Yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” The whole of Gennesaret was, doubtless, then, like a garden in fruitfulness, with many villages interspersed or bordering it; and all the country above, on the west, was full of habitations and in the highest state of culture. Indeed the whole region from the sea of Galilee westward, quite across the plain of Esdraelon to the Mediterranean, was, probably, by far the most fertile and populous part of Palestine.

CHAPTER XV.

AT CAPERNAUM AND THROUGH GALILEE.

On the Sabbath after his arrival in the city he went into the synagogue and taught. People were astonished. It was not the jargon of the Scribes, full

* De Bel. iii, 10, § 8.

of obscurities, and often of absurdities, such as have come down to us through the subsequent writings of their Rabbis, but was clear, fully within the comprehension of his hearers, practical, and above all, had an authority in the manner of delivery corresponding to the words. No hesitancy or appearance of doubt in him who spoke; but it was the language of one who knew; whose eye swept through all parts of his subject, the heavenly as well as the earthly, the divine as well as the human; and who felt that he had power and authority thus to speak.* "They were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power."† In the synagogue was a demoniac, whom he healed by his word; and afterwards, in the house of Peter, he restored to health also by his word, the mother-in-law of that disciple, sick of a fever.

Thus the early part of the Sabbath was passed in Capernaum; a time full of wonder and of strange surmisings among the people. Twice had this teacher declared himself to be the Messiah; once in Samaria, and once in Nazareth: but he was so different from the Messiah whom the nation had expected:—here, no earthly pomp, or glory, and no manifestations of a desire for kingly power; but, on the other hand, humility, indifference to rank, and abnegation of all human glory. Yet there was a strange mightiness in him. The spirits obeyed him. Disease left the wan and haggard frame at his command, and health flashed over the system: his very presence had a power in it; his manner, so gentle and winning, still inspired respect; his face, through which the inner be-

* Mark i, 22.

† Luke iv, 32.

ing spoke out, seemed to be stamped with divinity itself.

Such was this teacher, as he had appeared that day, in divine instructions in the synagogue, and afterwards among the people, filling them with many contradictory and perplexing thoughts. His healing powers, however, they could understand, and these stirred them immediately into action ; and there was a hurrying to and fro, not only in the city, but in all the country round about. For the warmest and most active, as well as the most blessed sympathies of our nature, were reached ; and people were carrying to the bedsides of the afflicted cheering news that a healer was among them whose power, both for mental and for bodily distress, was equal to every disease. In order to appreciate the gladness of such tidings, we must remember the condition of medical science even among the most learned practitioners at that time. There was a medical school at Antioch, in Syria, and one at Alexandria ; but the facts on which the true principles of that science are built are of subsequent discovery ; and in Palestine, at the period spoken of, physicians were rare, and were little to be relied on when they could be procured. The sick were left to perish unaided, or were administered to blindly and with doubtful result. A modern traveller, speaking of a Missionary Christian physician, with whom he was journeying in this same region of country, says of him, after they had stopped, one evening, subsequently to a day's explorations,—“ Dr. Kelley is still busy with his patients, who are all Druses and Mahommedans. How eagerly they listen to him,—he has so won their hearts by his benevolent aid ! It is truly touching to see how the

poor and miserable come to him for help for the body, and how they go away from him with the first tidings [of Christ] that ever met their ears.”*

Evening came on in Capernaum after this preaching in the synagogue ; and the shadows of the Galilean hills were cast over the beautiful lake, and went ascending the green sides of the opposite mountains,—a fair, quiet, Sabbath-evening scene, without ; but within the city all was fermentation and bustle. “All the city was gathered together at the door” of the house where the Messiah was staying. Gennesaret was a thickly settled region, and the country back of Capernaum was almost equally populous ; and the fame of Christ as a person wonderful in healing, as well as in teaching, had been rapidly spread abroad. As people heard of this certainty of cure, they hurried joyfully to communicate the intelligence to the sick. What intelligence it was ! The wan from suffering grew flushed with hope : the wasted found sudden energy, and came panting on towards the Great Healer, or cried to friends for transportation : the despairing had new words of comfort whispered in their ears, and took courage for this last effort : volunteer aid was ready for those who needed it : and speedily, among the crowds of the curious, blocking up the street, were intermingled all forms and stages of disease trying to force their way. The dying,—could his power reach them ? So the anxious friends queried, as they bore their precious burdens slowly and tenderly along. The chronic cases of many years,—could they be healed ? The plaintive voice, so long sharpened by pain, and almost unused to any other but outbursts of anguish,—

could this, ever, be changed into joy and praise? O make way! Let them see that Jesus: let them reach this Deliverer: let them come before him that he may see the distorted or wasted form, and be moved to pity! And on they struggled; sometimes shrieking in agony, as the crowd unwittingly jostled the couch; sometimes so death-like that consciousness was gone,—hope, however, remaining and shown in the tender looks bent over the sufferer. And, as the sick were borne along, the healed met them with shouts of joy and praise to God; while the wondering crowds scarcely could believe their own senses as they saw them return, as if brought alive from the dead.—All who came were healed,—the diseased both in body and mind.

Thus the night settled down over Capernaum an agitated city, full of wonder, full also of joy.

The Messiah, however, did not continue there long; for much work remained to be done in other parts of Galilee. Rising in the morning, long before day, he went to a retired place for communion with Heaven; but the disciples came to him there with the annunciation that "all men were seeking him."* The multitudes followed immediately after, with the entreaty that he would stay with them; but he replied, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for thereto am I sent."†

Peter and Andrew, and also James and John, had returned temporarily to their former occupation as fishermen; but having here received a more formal call to discipleship, they were with him again; and so they continued to the end of his ministry.

* Mark i, 37.

† Luke iv, 43.

He proceeded now to traverse Galilee once more, preaching and healing as he went. The multitude joining and following him had become very great ; for his fame had extended throughout Syria, and to the great cities of Decapolis east of the Jordan ; and people from all those regions, and from Jerusalem, and Judea generally, as well as from all parts of Galilee were hurrying to him : and the sick were brought,—“all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy ; and he healed them.”*

What strange sensations there must have been among all these multitudes, so intent, scrutinizing, watching the sick coming up, and beholding them immediately depart well and sound ; joining, if only from sympathy, in the words of the healed men glorifying God ; amazed at all they saw, amazed at what they heard ; and yet, with all this, doubting. They could not doubt respecting the miracles ; for these were obvious to their senses, and were public, and repeated, till there could be no question about this astonishing power in the Messiah, and respecting the endorsement thus given in them from Heaven, of his teachings and his claims. Yet they were not satisfied. They walked in a maze of thoughts. The Jewish mind had been cramped for so long a time, so dwarfed amid narrow prejudices, that it was difficult to give it enlargement of thought, and especially such enlargement as Christ was now endeavoring to produce—a belief in the brotherhood of mankind. Cicero called them *suspiciosa ac maledica civitas*. Tacitus

* Matt. iv, 23-25.

says of them, " Connected among themselves by the most obstinate and inflexible faith, the Jews extend their charity to all of their own profession, while towards the rest of mankind they nourish a sullen and implacable hatred of strangers. The first elements of their religion teach their proselytes to despise the gods, to abjure their country, and forget their parents and children."*

Therefore they were obtuse to the truths now preached. There was wonderful power as well as beauty in these truths which their hearts acknowledged : there was a strange Presence in him around whom they were crowding, a seeming glow from heaven itself shining out through his countenance ; and his miracles had the stamp of divinity upon them ; but when he spoke to them of a kingdom in men's hearts and souls, embracing *equally* Jew, and Roman, and Greek ; making a brotherhood of all men, making it a duty to love even their enemies, whose iron heel was pressing their necks, their feelings revolted, and the glorious truths of the new kingdom fell idly on their ear. Their very belief in the coming of a Messiah was in such a channel as to increase their selfishness, and pride, and arrogance, and to cause them to be earthly in their most cherished hopes ; for was he not to make them the supreme rulers on the globe ? This they believed, and their hearts rioted in the thoughts of their coming worldly triumph. Thus the multitudes, as they followed Christ, and saw and heard, did it in much darkness of mind—a cherished darkness which most of them did not wish to have turned into light. But still

they had glimmerings of truth : some sought for more ; some believed.

So they proceeded, closely attending the Messiah in his progress through Galilee, watchful, often admiring, always full of wonder, and full of excitement.

— But one day they all recoiled in horror and dismay from the presence of Christ ; for there was suddenly at his feet a form that scarcely seemed to be human, so disfigured was it with leprosy, the foulest and most loathed disease known in their land. It was also considered to be contagious when in its advanced forms, such as were clearly exhibited in the present case. The Jews regarded it as a visitation of Providence, and called it “ the finger of God ; ” emphatically, “ the stroke.” Persons infected with it were excluded, by their law, from society, and were compelled to prevent any accidental approach to them by giving a distant warning cry of “ Unclean, unclean ! ” How this man, if man he might now be called, had come to break through this law, it is impossible to say. Probably, a sudden hope had made him desperate in boldness ; the crowd had given way before him in horror and alarm : and there he was now at the feet of Christ, with a plaintive and broken cry, “ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”

A competent writer says of this disease : “ A recent leprosy may be healed, but an inveterate one is incurable. * * The common marks by which, as physicians tell us, an inveterate leprosy may be discerned, are these : the voice becomes hoarse, like that of a dog which has been long barking, and comes through the nose, rather than through the mouth ; the pulse is small and heavy, slow and disordered ;

the blood abounds with white corpuscles, * * ; the eyes are red and inflamed, and project out of the head, but cannot be moved either to the right or left ; the ears are swelled and red, corroded with ulcers about the roots of them, and encompassed with small kernels ; the nose sinks, because the cartilage rots ; the nostrils are open, and the passage stopped with ulcers at the bottom ; the tongue is dry, black, swelled, ulcerated, shortened, divided into ridges, and beset with little white pimples ; the skin is uneven, hard, and insensible ; even if a hole be made in it, or it be cut, a putrefied sanies issues from it instead of blood.”*

An American author, who, during a residence of more than 20 years in Palestine, has seen the disease in all its forms, thus describes its progress as presented to his eyes : “ The hair falls from the head and eyebrows ; the nails loosen, decay and drop off ; joint after joint of the fingers and toes shrink up and fall away. The gums are absorbed and the teeth disappear. The nose, the eyes, the tongue and palate are slowly consumed, and finally the wretched victim sinks into the earth and disappears, while medicine has no power to stay the ravages of this fell disease or even to mitigate sensibly its tortures.”†

Such was the nature of the disease of this man, who, “ *full of it*,”‡ had now prostrated himself at the Messiah’s feet, with the cry, “ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” Abject he was in all but his faith. Loathsome, but glorious in faith. The body a horror, the soul resplendent through his faith. His

* Robinson’s Calmet.

† Thompson’s “ Land and the Book.”

‡ Luke v, 12.

tongue scarcely uttering intelligible sounds ; but pronouncing the words of faith that brought salvation. How the crowds, crushing against each other, gazed and watched for the result ! It came immediately.

“ I will, be thou clean ;” and Christ touched him.

At the word, a transformation took place. The hideous disease was gone ; all the foul signs were swept away from his person, and he rose to his feet clean and sound,* a well man. With a thrill of joy—such as no thought in our mind can reach—he looked down upon himself ; found that he could use all of his limbs ; felt the soundness all through his system ; saw the people no longer shrinking from him in abhorrence, but gazing in admiration and kindness, and approaching him—lately so shunned,—to satisfy themselves of this amazing change. His plaintive cry, “ Unclean, unclean,” was exchanged for thanksgivings and loud rejoicings amid the congratulations which soon poured upon him from the multitudes around. The man’s burst of joy over, the Messiah charged him not to publish this abroad : for, in the strange city where they were, the running of crowds, and the confusion and uproar, might give offence to the authorities, as well as interrupt his work of teaching ; but the man’s wild joy could not be restrained, and he published and “ blazed it abroad.” The Messiah, in consequence, could no longer openly enter the city, but kept outside, away from its thoroughfares : the people, however, came to him there, crowding from every quarter, far and near, in order to be healed.†

But we must return to observe the central person in

* Mark i, 42.

† Luke v, 12-15: Mark i, 40-45.

this late wonderful scene : for, above all other interests, above the wonder of the cure itself, come before us the majesty of Christ himself, and the calm dignity of his words, I WILL, uttered in that quietude of conscious power which could have been only in one to whom infinite power had been forever familiar and who felt its existence in himself. We see this also in all his other miracles ; and it is even more remarkable than the miracles themselves ;—a quietude in the perfect consciousness of power ; a simplicity of omnipotence, which reminds us of the command recorded in the Bible, “ *Let there be light : and there was light.*”

There was, soon afterwards, another scene where the Divinity within Christ asserted its rights and its powers, in a yet more striking degree. After the healing of the leper, he had spent some days in still further teachings and miraculous cures, through the country ; and then had returned to Capernaum ; where, the rumor of his presence being quickly spread, crowds began to gather about him as before.

The large houses in those countries are built around a court-yard, which can be shaded by an awning drawn over it when necessary ; or the court has sometimes a partial covering made by trellis-work or loose planks, perhaps forming supports to vines. An arched passage from the street, and a gate-way in this passage, admit into the court ; and, from the latter, access is had to the various parts of the house. In such a court-yard, at Capernaum, the Messiah was, one day, teaching, after his return ; and around him, in addition to the usual crowds, were Pharisees and Doctors of the law, “ which had come out of every

town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem." They had been roused to a critical attention by the increased fame of Christ, and were here to scrutinize. Dense masses of people filled all the court and the arched way, out into the street ; and the scene was a very remarkable one. The speaker had just come from a wonderful exercise of miraculous power throughout Galilee : and here, also, as usual in his addresses, there seemed to be that about him personally—his manner, his Presence, his words—which was more than human.* Among this audience now, "the power of the Lord was present to heal them."† Where should they place this teacher,—in what condition of the natural or the supernatural ? was a question greatly agitating the public mind.‡ Therefore, as he spoke on this occasion, all eyes were fixed on him in deepest attention, and yet variously ; the multitude gazing with reverence mixed with awe ; the Pharisees and Scribes, with their old captious feeling, and with jealousies towards one who had not studied in their schools, and had shown no marked respect for them or their pretensions ; who also, with no advantages of scholastic training, had shown himself so superior to them all. They watched critically to see what opinion they were to form of an individual now so largely occupying attention.—But a sudden interruption occurred,—a singular event, which soon, however, added to the deep interest of the scene.

Out in the street, four men had come, bearing, on a couch, a paralytic, who was unable to help himself. A new hope had seized him and them, when they

* See the testimony of his enemies—"Never man spake like this man."

† Luke v, 17.

heard that Christ had returned to Capernaum ; and, with the quick tenderness of friendship, they had been hurrying the sick man towards the Messiah, when presently they were brought to a stand by the crowd filling every spot about the door. It was found impossible to proceed, for the archway was packed closely by human beings, trying to catch the words of the Great Teacher within ; and the people either could not or would not give way. A fear came over the sick man, such a fear as can be known only to one long diseased and helpless, but who is suddenly roused by a great hope, and now that hope made seemingly vain. He turned his feeble gaze on the multitude, full of entreaty ; but they did not move : exhortations from friends were of no avail : probably every one believed that an effort to get through such a crowd must be vain. But the friends were not to be baffled by difficulties ; and they found some outside way by which the sick man was brought safely to ~~the~~ flat roof of the house, whence they looked down upon the scene in the court below. Some of the loose covering over the spot where the speaker was standing was removed ; and, by means of cords, the couch and the invalid were lowered down* to the feet of the Messiah. No one ever

* Mark says, "uncovered the roof where he was ; Luke, "they let him down through the tiling with his couch," διὰ τῶν κεραμῶν, which here, in our Bible is translated *through* the tiling. In Acts ix, 25, however, διὰ is translated *by*, not *through*, διὰ τῆς τοίχους, *by* the wall. Also in 2 Cor. xi, 33, διὰ *by* the wall. The Greek word κεραμοί, originally meant tiles ; but afterwards it was used for any kind of roof or covering. The passage here, undoubtedly, means *by* the roof or edge of the roof

sought his help in vain ; and, especially, no one with such a look of entreaty and faith as now, from that couch, met the attention of Christ. From the housetop, from the crowds, and the Pharisees and Scribes, from every side, there was a gaze of intensest interest.

"Son," said the Messiah, "thy sins are forgiven thee."

Among the hearers there was a start of wonder :—among some of them, also, of horror and amazement.

"Who is this that speaketh *blasphemies* ? Who can forgive sins save God alone,"—the leaders were saying in themselves.

The Messiah knew their secret reasoning, and replied to it, but without one word towards denying the justness of their conclusions. On the contrary, he gave his sanction to their logic, and put forth, clearly and fully, his claims to Divinity.—

"What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins (he said to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house."

The paralytic man—paralytic no more—rose up. What a strange sensation there was to him in that new strength ! How his heart bounded in him, as he felt the power to move his limbs and to stand ; as he felt health once more nerving all his muscles, glowing in all his frame ! Amazement held the spectators dumb for a while, overwhelmed by the Messiah's high claims to the Godhead : their feelings, at first

astonishment, and a shrinking at the seeming blasphemy in his language, and then amazement, not only at the deliberate re-assertion of his claims, but the sanction to them by Heaven itself. They were filled with awe at the idea of the possibility of such a Presence with them, and fears were mingled with their words giving glory to God.* Well might they say, as they did, while retiring to their homes, "We have seen strange things to-day." The healed man also joined in glorifying God.

But discussions respecting the events of the day were continued, with deep earnestness, long afterwards, at their homes. The Pharisees and Scribes, especially, were thoroughly perplexed. There was such a strange power in that teaching; there was such a greatness in the speaker, uttering his doctrines with authority, and these doctrines so clear and practical, and carrying to the heart conviction of their truth. All about him had the marks of humility in life; yet real greatness can afford to be voluntarily humble; and there was even a grandeur in this retiracy and unpretendingness of Christ, mixed, as they were, with a latent power to which there seemed to be no bounds. With this humiliation in his appearance, he was claiming the attributes of God! It was blasphemy in man:—was he man? Yes, for their own eyes satisfied them of that; and yet, in his words, his doctrines, his face, there shone out what might well be Divinity enthroned for a while on earth. What a Divinity, too, in his manner of address to the sick man;—his word, simply, to be

healed, and he was healed ;—as in the old manner, when God spake and it was done.

—And yet, if he were the Christ, the Messiah, God with men,—so unpretending and unambitious, so humble in all his surroundings and contented with them, what was to become of their nation's hope of dominion and glory ? Judea was still to remain trampled under foot ; its expected triumphs a dream. Why should he appear also as he did ? Why in the form Their eyes beheld ? Why not, at least, in some pomp and circumstance of honor ?

—Thus, in doubts and queryings, and in feeding the heart with worldly passions, these Pharisees and Scribes wandered off from the truth. How many other men have, since that time, done the same !

CHAPTER XVI.

AT JERUSALEM: ALSO AT CAPERNAUM.

THE Messiah had given recently another proof of his preference of what was right above what was popular, by calling Matthew, a publican, from the very receipt of customs, to be a disciple. Accompanied by him, and by the others so far selected to this office, he went now to the Passover at Jerusalem, disregarding of what the Rabbis and Doctors would say of his retinue, taken from a class despised by their learned men, and called by them, "earth," and "worms," fit only to be trod upon.

Indeed, the whole party from Galilee were sufficiently humble in their dress, and were unpretentious in manner; yet one of them was Lord, not of Judea only, but of the earth; and two of his followers have left writings the value of which it will require the fullness of eternity to show. Souls in this world, and in the next, will not cease to bless the records of Matthew and John.

There was a pool at Jerusalem, called Bethesda, having five porches or colonnades attached to it, under the shelter of which were a great number of men, "blind, and halt, and withered," waiting for the "moving of the water" in the pool. "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever, then, first after the troubling of the water, stepped in was made whole." A very singular fountain, with a similar periodicity of flow, which the writer of this book has himself seen, still exists at Jerusalem. A few days after the author's arrival in that city, (in 1834,) he was, one day, going alone on the outskirts during the sickness of his friend and guide; and on the side of the valley of Jehoshaphat, not far below the old temple walls, he noticed an opening in the hill-side with steps leading down. He descended some distance—27 steps cut in the rock;—and at last, in the dim light, was just about stepping into a pool of water, when a timely discovery saved him from the partial bath. The fountain was about 18 inches deep, and a few feet across, the water perfectly clear, but with a slightly foreign taste. Returning there, a few days after this, he was astonished to find, instead of the clear fountain, only a muddy puddle, with but a quart or two of water left. Others have

noticed the same periodicity in this fountain*—called the Fountain of the Virgin. A subterranean channel leading from it has, since that time, been explored and found to conduct to the pool of Siloam : and this “Fountain of the Virgin” is itself, doubtless, supplied by artificial conduits, from sources under the temple site, or perhaps from Acra. Its periodicity, though, of course, natural, has never been explained.

The Messiah, on this occasion of his visiting the pool of Bethesda, stopped near a man—a cripple for 38 years,—lying there with longings to feel the power of the water ; often taunted with a sudden hope ; then springing up with painful effort, as the water was troubled, but only to be disappointed by seeing others more active than himself step in and be healed.

“Wilt thou be made whole ?”—the words were addressed to him.

“Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming another steppeth down before me.”

“Rise, take up thy bed and walk.”

There was power as well as authority, in that voice. A movement ! strength ! the man was on his feet, whole and sound and strong ! He did not know the Healer, who, inasmuch as many were assembling, had withdrawn : but he did as directed, took his bit of mat or couch, and started for his home.

But it was the Sabbath : and the Jewish leaders meeting him, reproved him for the breach of its sanctity by carrying a burthen on that day. He told them of the directions given him ; and, afterwards having

* See Robinson's *Researches*, and also Thompson's “*Land and the Book*.”

met the Messiah, and discovered who it was that had healed him, he informed them that it "was Jesus who had made him whole."

Christ was now in a city where, whatever was fierce in bigotry, lofty in religious assumption, or deadly in malice when such prejudices were wounded, had their climax ; and the part of a teacher is not only to exhibit truths, but to expose their opposites for condemnation. In Jerusalem he must, therefore, soon come into collision with the rulers, from whom, when once their ire had been aroused, only the fiercest measures of revenge might be expected, so far as the Roman power would permit. Of the Messiah's opinion of these men, "hypocrites," "serpents," "generation of vipers," we have a record further on in history ; and from the first he knew them thoroughly in all the baseness of their nature and of their designs. Nor did he, among them, ever cease to place the full power, both of his teachings and his example, on the side of truth. We are too apt, in our considerations of the gentleness, the mildness, the benevolence and the unconquerable love of Christ, in this his ministry, to lose sight of the *moral force* there was in him, and which it was that led to the plots against his life ; and, as far as these rulers were concerned, brought him finally to suffer on the cross. This force made no parade of itself, and was seldom a prominent object in his character, often seemingly latent, but it was ceaseless in operation and ever felt : and where there was a necessity, then it came out fully and openly and decidedly, as we see in his cleansing the temple, and in the woes hurled there afterwards, on the Pharisees, and, indeed, through all his ministry on earth. His religion was to be, forever,

aggressive against all wickedness ; and he was himself aggressive ; but we now recognize, even in this, such a greatness of love that it hides all else from our eyes ; and so, to many persons in our day, Christ appears to have been tame and passive, when the fact is that the really grand aggressive force in him is veiled from us by his more striking traits of benevolence and love. Even in the scene which comes immediately after this, in Galilee, his *anger** was deeply blended with grief at man's hardness of heart.

When the healed man from the pool of Bethesda informed the rulers who it was that had directed him to carry his bed on the Sabbath, they immediately came to the Messiah with a murderous purpose in their hearts. He had before been obnoxious : they now began their plots for his life.—His very first words to them were an assertion of the right, through the God-head in him, to act as he had done.

“ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”

They understood him perfectly, and they “ sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”†

But there was no retraction on his part ; only re-assertion in a more positive form. * * “ For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son : that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” The address was continued in the same clear and decided language, with declarations of the power in heaven be-

* Mark iii, 5.

† John v, 18.

longing to him, and of his supremacy in the judgment to come.*

While returning from Jerusalem to Galilee, as he was passing on the Sabbath through a field of grain, his disciples plucked some of the ears for satisfying their hunger; and when the Pharisees in company drew his attention reproachingly to the fact, he defended his followers, declaring, also, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."†

They had begun now to watch him, in order to find occasions for accusation, and he met their scrutiny readily; for it would give him only the better opportunity for impressing his doctrines. An opportunity for this offered itself soon after his return to Galilee.

He had gone to the synagogue on the Sabbath and had taught as usual, after which he noticed in the congregation a man having a withered hand. Scribes and Pharisees were attentively observing both him and this individual, to see whether they might not find there another charge against him of violating the Sabbath. He knew it.

"Rise, and stand forth in the midst," he said to the man; and he did so.—Turning to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were then plotting for his life, he said: "I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?"

They did not answer; and he "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts;" then towards the man.—

"Stretch forth thy hand." He did so: it was whole as the other.

* See John v, 19-47.

† Matt. xii, 8.

Those men who were plotting murder there in their hearts on the Sabbath, and yet would not sanction an act of mercy on that day, lest its sacredness should be violated, now went out, and immediately, for their fell purposes, formed a combination of a very singular kind with another Jewish sect. These were the Herodians, a set of men who, it will be remembered, had become the advocates, first of Herod the Great, and were such now of his sons, Herod Antipas, king of Galilee and Perea, and of Philip of Gaulonitis ; maintaining that the Roman government was just, and that it was the duty of the Jews to submit ; also that, in the present circumstances, they might follow, with a good conscience, many of the heathen practices and modes. Nothing could be more at variance with the Pharisaic doctrines of a strict adherence to their law, and of their proclaimed maxim, that God only was their king, and that it was wrong to submit to any other : yet these Pharisees now went out from the synagogue, “ and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Jesus, how they might destroy him.”* The Herodians might easily be persuaded that the Messiah was setting up a kingdom in opposition to that of their Master, Herod Antipas ; or, at all events, that dangerous tumults against the government might arise among a people at this moment so excited about a promised, mighty King. The two sects, Pharisee and Herodian, joined here in compact, their antagonistic principles made to act in concert, through their greater enmity towards Christ.

With what feelings, then, of rage and jealousy

* Mark iii, 6.

must they have looked on the events which immediately ensued at Capernaum ;—thongs brought by his fame from all parts of Palestine, and from beyond its limits ;—people crowding around him ; the sick, in the multitude of applications, endeavoring if only to touch him, in order to be healed ; and demoniacs falling down before him, crying out, “Thou art the Son of God.” We are puzzled here again, as we often are in reading the Gospels, by the notice of what is unknown in our own time and seems to have been peculiar to the period of which we are writing, that is, men possessed of spirits of various kinds. In our entire ignorance as to the extreme thinness of the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world, and how easily it may be pierced by supernatural force when occasion requires, while to us it is so impervious, we can only content ourselves with the query, suggested in a former part of this work, that if the powers of heaven are to be shaken when the Son of man comes to the judgment, how much more must they have been shaken during that wonderful period when he laid aside his glory which he had with the Father, and was a sojourner on our earth ? But these are facts about which we are little capable of reasoning, as, indeed, we must be, whenever we try to peer into the supernatural, and to query about the mighty, unknown wonders it contains.

The scene at Capernaum had become an exciting one. People had come from Tyre and Sidon on the north, and even from Idumea and its capital, Petra, on the south ; from the east of the Jordan, and from Jerusalem, and all parts of Judea ;* and a vast mul-

* Mark iii, 8.

titude were congregated, brought together by the fame of the Messiah's teachings and his deeds. Through these crowds the friends of the sick men were still hurrying them; and people's sympathies were, every moment, excited by such sights;—by the wan and feeble, and the distorted by disease; by eyes raised imploringly from couches; or by faint voices entreating them to give way, that the Great Healer might be reached in time; by the halt and lame, trying to force an approach; and by the blind, asking to be directed amid the dense masses: while, here and there, over the various noises, rose the acknowledging cry of the demoniacs: "Thou art the Son of God." The scene, indeed, might easily become tumultuous, especially through the instigation of enemies; and the Messiah at last withdrew to the borders of the lake, where a small boat had been brought; from this, also, his teachings could be more readily heard than amid the dense throngs pressing on him from every side.*

CHAPTER XVII.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

AFTER the scenes in our last chapter, the Messiah sought, in the evening, somewhere back of Capernaum, a retired spot for prayer; and there he remained all the night in communion with Heaven. He needed

* See Mark iii, 7-12; Matt. xii, 15-21.

rest after such a day as we have just been describing ; but he felt still more the need of the refreshment which such communion only could afford.

Earth must have been to him lonely. Even his friends had few ideas common with himself ; and, with all his teachings, quite to the last of his ministry, his immediate followers themselves did not understand the kingdom which he was endeavoring to establish. Where, indeed, could he find any one to join with him in that vastness of love which was for all mankind, or to comprehend its nature ? His views of things were infinitely wider than those of the men around him, or of any man : his knowledge embraced both worlds, the seen and the unseen : he was infinitely above all others : and thus to him there must have been a solitude on the earth, into which no one could come, bringing that companionship which even the highest natures long for, that full communion which makes the greatest happiness of our being. He had such fellowship with others as could be found in relieving their distress, in elevating them towards heaven by his teachings, and in ever doing them good by the mightiness of power at his command ; but companionship there was none, and there could be none, upon the earth.

His full communion could be only with heaven ; and in such nights as this, when retiring from all human beings, he put himself away from earthly things, then was his solitude broken ; for the companionship of heaven came fully to him again.

Thus he spent the night, and until the morning waked up the world to activity once more, and his work of teaching and healing was to be resumed.

That day's teaching is among the most memorable things of earth ; for it gave us the **SERMON ON THE MOUNT**.

The narrow thoroughfares at Capernaum were ill adapted to be a place for teaching, and no house could contain the multitudes thronging about him ; and, recently, he had been compelled to take a boat, from which, as it laid by the shore, he could address them : now he led the way, back of the city, to the heights of the table-land, which, as already mentioned, here overlooks the lake. Seen from below, the shore there has a mountainous aspect, rising to the height of eight or nine hundred feet, although when examined from above, the ground shows itself to be only the termination of the great Esdraelon plain. These heights are, however, themselves not uniform, but are broken into irregularities of outline, and, especially at one place, where a part called "The Horns of Hattin" shows, as seen from the lake, an altitude of some hundreds of feet above the rest. These Horns of Hattin form a short ridge, running east and west, with a depression in its middle, and are, especially the eastern end, pointed out by tradition as the scene of the interesting gathering on that day. "The summit of the eastern horn," says Robinson, "is a little circular plain ; and the top of the lower ridge, between the two, is also flattened to a plain. * * This point commands a near view of the great plain over which we had passed north of Tabor, and also of the basin Ard-el-Hamma [closely adjoining Hattin] spread out before us with fields of various views, like a carpet. On the other side, the eye takes in, even here, only the northern part of the

Lake of Tiberias, and on its western shore the little plain of Gennesaret ; while on the north and north-west, Safed, and a few other villages, are seen upon the hills."

It is quite probable that the tradition which assigns this place as the scene of the Sermon on the Mount is correct ;* and the objects immediately around would readily furnish the illustrations in that discourse. A gorge-like valley, leading out from Gennesaret, is called, at the present time, the " Vale of Doves," from the numbers of " fowls of the air " having their homes among the cavernous rocks, high up in its sides : the time was spring, just after the Passover, and Palestine is remarkable for its profusion of brilliant flowers at that season ; while the peak of Safed (if then built upon,) or the town on Tabor, would suggest the allusion to a " city set upon a hill."

The place was, indeed, fitted well to be the scene of that sermon :—the open vault of sky above ; the lofty elevation, where the morning air was wafting the incense of flowers towards heaven ; the wide prospect :—nature all around in its purity and grandeur seeming ready to say *Amen* to the pure and great word of Nature's God uttered there to men for man's imperishable soul. We cannot but contrast the scene of that morning with the one at Sinai,—its barren crags, and thunder and lightning, making people stand afar off in fear ; and remark how characteristic the two scenes were of the two dispensations to which they belonged.

* Here also was fought the bloody, decisive battle between the Crusaders and the Turks.

The disciples of Christ had become numerous ; and he had now, out of them, selected twelve whom he named *Apostles*,* that is, "persons to be sent forth," who were to be more especial attendants on his acts and teachings, and witnesses for him before the world.

They accompanied him in this ascent of the mountain back of Capernaum ; as did also many from the city, and regions adjoining.† When, on reaching the summit he sat down,—the position for teaching,—the multitudes gathered closely around, and their curiosity was intensified. The circumstances seemed to show that the teaching would be of a more important character than usual. What would it be ? We can see them closing together, so as not to lose a word of what might be uttered ; their eager faces, their silence of attention and their listening attitudes, giving evidence of the deep interest which they felt. Were angels also listening ? We believe they were : and generations, since that, of the tempted, and tried, and weary, and sad, and of the longing on earth for heaven, and of the seekers for comfort here, and for light in darkness, and for a sure foundation for faith, and for comfort and peace, have gone to those words, and have found them just what their souls needed most. Yet there is no eloquence in them ; no overwhelming grandeur of thought or sentiment : on the contrary, the language is very plain, and the thoughts and sentiments are marked with great simplicity : but we feel, while reading, that the soul's God and Maker is speaking to the soul,—speaking to it in kindness and love. The scene was a great one, where those words, ever since that time so productive

* Luke vi, 13.

† Inferred from Matt. vii, 28.

of blessings to men, were uttered. In our thoughts we glance over those intensely interested multitudes, to fix our eyes where theirs were fixed ;—on the central object of that assembly ; on those features of God-like expression, those eyes lighted up by unutterable love, on the lineaments where the Divinity enthroned was taking form to the human eye. In all that grand scene of nature, we see him only who was worthy to be highest over nature and in heaven ; and we hear him speaking worthily, even for him :—for they are the words of eternal life.

When the occasion was over, and the people were returning down the mountain towards their homes, they went thoughtfully, not yet recovered from the astonishment which had settled upon them, while observing his doctrines and his manner : for they all felt that “ he had taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.”*

We can see the better how well they might be surprised when we come to read of the usual instructions in their synagogues, and to observe the frivolous subjects often of the teachings there. In order that the reader may himself form some idea of these, we here give quotations from Rabbinical writings adduced by Lightfoot : for “ although the works to which he refers were written subsequently to the birth of Christ, yet they are generally considered as correct representations of the moral and religious opinions which the Rabbis inculcated and which the Jewish people imbibed and observed in the days of our Saviour’s ministry.”†

* Matt. vii, 29.

† Preface to Lightfoot’s works, by J. R. Pitman, A. M.

We present some extracts made by that scholar, classified under different heads.

"Absurd legends and stories."—'R. Judah sat looking in the law before the Babylonish synagogue in Zippor: there was a bullock passed by him to the slaughter, and it lowed. Because he did not deliver that bullock from the slaughter, he was struck with the tooth-ache for the space of 13 years.' Adam, when first formed, reached from earth to heaven, and had a tail like an orang-outang. Og, of Basan, walked during the deluge by the side of the ark, and sometimes rode astride on it: from one of his teeth Abram made a bedstead. The wings of the bird Bar Juchne, when extended, causes an eclipse of the sun: one of her eggs, which fell from her nest, broke down 300 cedars and inundated 60 villages, &c., &c.

"Opinions relative to the Sabbath."—'It is not only permitted to lead a beast out to watering on the Sabbath day: but they might draw water for him and pour it into the troughs, provided only they do not carry the water and set it before the beast to drink, but the beast comes and drinks it of his own accord.' 'Women may not look into a looking-glass on the Sabbath day, if it be fixed to a wall.' 'He that hath tooth-ache, let him not swallow vinegar to spit it out again: but he may swallow it, so he swallow it down. He that hath a sore throat, let him not gargle it with oil; but he may swallow down the oil, whence if he receive a cure, it is well. Let no man chew mastich or rub his teeth with spice for a cure: but if he do this to make his mouth sweet, it is allowed.'

"Superstition with regard to amulets, charms, magic, &c."—The senior who is chosen into the council ought

to be skilled in the arts of astrologers, jugglers, diviners, sorcerers, &c., that he may be able to judge of those who are guilty of the same.' 'The chamber Hap-parva, in the temple itself, was built by a certain magician, whose name was Parvah, by art magic.' 'Four and twenty of the school Rabbi, intercalating the year at Lydda, were killed by the evil-eye,' i. e., sorceries. The Talmud, after cautioning its votaries against drinking water by night, lest it should cause dizziness and blindness, instructs them, if they so drink, to guard against these maladies by repeating *Shivri, Vriri, Riri, Iri, Ri*. 'When a child laughs in its sleep in the night of a Sabbath, or a new moon, the demon Lilith is toying with it : then let the parents thrice exclaim, Begone cursed Lilith, and at each exclamation pat the nose of the child.'

" *Hypocrisy in prayer*.—' R. Joachin said, I saw R. Jannai standing and praying in the streets of Zippor ; and going four cubits, and then praying the additional prayer.'

" *Puerile and ridiculous descriptions*.—They detail the number of angels and demons, their mode of birth, precise names, magnitude and stature, residences and peculiar offices. Equally childish are the reveries of the Rabbis, relative to the chorography of Paradise, its various divisions and names thereof. With the same accuracy they mark out the different compartments of Hell or Gehinnon ; the extent and inmates of each section, the various intensities of penal fire and the processes of purgation.

" *Drunkenness as a matter of religion*.—' Rabba saith, A man is bound to make himself so mellow on the feast of Purim that he shall not be able to distin-

guish between cursed be Haman and blessed be Mordecai.'

"*Absurd calculations.*—'The ladder of Jacob is the ascent of the altar and the altar itself. The angels are princes or monarchs. The king of Babylon ascended 70 steps: the king of the Medes, 52; the king of Greece, 180: the king of Edom—it is uncertain how many.' They reckon the breadth of the ladder to have been about 8,000 parasangs, i. e., about 32,000 miles, and the bulk of each angel was about 8,000 English miles in compass.

"*Punctilious washing of hands.*—The Rabbins delivered, 'The washing of hands for common things (or common food) was unto the joining of the arm.' 'The second waters cleanse whatsoever parts of the hands the first waters had washed. But if the first waters had gone above the juncture of the arm, the second waters do not cleanse, because they do not cleanse above the juncture. If, therefore, the waters which went not above the juncture return upon the hands again, they are unclean.' There are a great many injunctions on this subject.

"*National vanity.*—'If one sees one of the Gentiles fall into the sea, he shall not fetch him up; for it is said, Thou shalt not stand up against the blood of thy neighbor. But such an one is not thy neighbor.' 'The nations of the world are likened to dogs.' 'An Israelite that slayeth a stranger sojourning among them is not to be put to death by the Sanhedrim for it; because it is said, If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor.' 'If any one's ox shall gore his neighbor's ox; his neighbor's not a heathen's; when he saith *neighbor's*, he excludes

heathen's.' 'The dust of Syria defiles, as well as the dust of other heathen countries.' 'Wicked heathen's little ones, all men confess they shall not come into the world to come.' 'Whosoever lives within the land of Israel is absolved from all iniquities. And whosoever is buried within the land of Israel is as if he were buried under the altar.' 'The men of Israel are wise, for the very climate makes wise.'

"Subtle distinctions.—Any spittle found in the city was clean, except that which was found in the upper streets. The hinges of the gates of the temple were heard as far as a Sabbath-day's journey eight times numbered. The hinges, indeed, not farther, but the gates themselves were heard to Jericho. There is a dispute upon that precept, Levit. xvii, 3 : If any one kill a bird upon a holy-day, the Shammean school saith, 'Let him dig with an instrument and cover the blood.' The school of Hillel saith, 'Let him not kill at all, if he have not dust ready by him to cover the blood.'

"Intricate questions.—Whether a man may bless God for the sweet smell of incense which he smells offered to idols? Whether a man at his devotions, if a serpent come and bite him in the heel, may turn and stoop and shake it off or not?

"Logical deductions.—The Jews do gather 613 precepts, negative and affirmative, to be in the whole law, according to the 613 letters in the two tables, and so many veins and members in a man's body. 'While he asketh necessities for himself, let him not use any language, but the Syriac; because the angels do not understand the Syriac language.'

More in the same style might be adduced; but

these are sufficient to show the reader what was probably the nature of the discussions among the Rabbis, and the subject of their teachings at that period : we may also here refer back to the celebrated sayings of Hillel and Shammai, the two great Jewish leaders just before our Saviour's time, from a Jewish history, as quoted at pages 98 and 99 in this book.

Immediately on returning from the mountain to Capernaum, the Messiah was called upon again to exercise his power of miraculous healing : the request brought, this time, by the elders of the city. Jewish elders were the princes of tribes and heads of family associations. It was seldom that the Jewish rulers showed him any honors ; for there seems to have been small affinity between him and them ; and they now came by entreaty of a Roman centurion, who, instead of bearing himself haughtily among them, they said, "loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue." His servant was sick of palsy, and apparently in those frightful spasms when paralysis is verging on apoplexy, and was "grievously tormented." The centurion, fearing, perhaps, that his being a foreigner might stay the benevolent hand of Christ, asked the elders to solicit him to come and heal ; but modesty overwhelmed him even in this solicitude ; for while the Messiah, accompanied by the rulers, was on the way to his house, friends of the officer were sent, saying, that their master did not deem himself worthy to receive such a visitor : "But speak only the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ;

and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." The Messiah turned to the elders with an expression of admiration at the man's strong faith, and added, that many such, of other nations, should enter the kingdom of heaven, while unbelieving Jews should be cast out into outer darkness: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." They went no further: and the centurion's friends, returning immediately, found the servant well.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

NAIN.—CASTLE OF MACHERUS.

The writer of this, while looking out, one day, from an upper window of his lodgings in Pera, a suburb of Constantinople, on the opposite side of "The Golden Horn," saw just below him, a procession advancing rapidly up the street. It was headed by persons carrying on their shoulders a species of bier or couch, on which was the dead body of a young girl,—one who might have been 16 or 17 years of age. There was no coffin, simply the open couch; and the deceased lay there dressed in white garments, such as she had worn while living, the face uncovered, flowers scattered about the head and the dress and bier; all reminding one but little of death; for the features were like those of a person in a quiet sleep.

* Matthew viii, 5-13; Luke vii, 1-10. Matthew speaks of the centurion as having come himself; on the law-maxim *qui facit per alium facit per se*.

But still there was unmistakably, there, the majesty of death ;—that majesty which every one recognizes, and before which we are always filled with awe.

I have seen that majesty most strangely impressive also on the battle-field ; where the dead were lying thickly, and where the hands of victorious enemies were giving them a hasty and unhonored burial : but, still, that silent impressiveness was there, even in those discolored corpses lying, as they had fallen in the maddening strife ; and people spoke in tones of gentleness, although these dead men had fallen while acting as our bitterest foes.

We come now to speak of a scene in Galilee connected with death.

The reader will remember that, parallel to Carmel, the southwestern boundary of Esdraelon, and near to it, is the short range of Mount Gilboa : and then parallel to it, a little further to the north, another similar range, called Little Hermon. From the northeastern side of this last, a short spur of table land projects, on which was a small city, called Nain, overlooking the plain below, with Endor not far off, and Mount Tabor about five miles to the north. The time of this scene was near the close of day. Scarcely a finer spot could have been chosen for seeing the quiet of evening fall over the great landscape of Esdraelon, than was this plateau of Nain, from which objects below were all distinct,—the numerous villages, the orchards, the signs of busy husbandry, and the fields of waving grain ; for the time we speak of was at the harvest season over that immense plain. But as, in our history, we may consider ourselves by Nain, looking down over the interesting scene, we

hear the quiet of the evening suddenly broken in upon by loud wailings from a procession, issuing from one of the city gates,—a funeral procession with all the demonstrations belonging to such an occasion in the East.

“The grief of the orientals formerly on the occasion of death, was, as it is at this day in the East, very extreme. As soon as a person died, the females in the family, with a loud voice, set up a sorrowful cry. They continued it as long as they could without taking breath, and the first shriek of wailing died away in a low sob. After a time they repeated the same cry and continued it for eight days.

“A box or coffin was not used, except in Babylon and Egypt. The corpse was wrapped in folds of linen and placed upon a bier, and was carried by four or six persons to the tomb. * * The mourners who followed the bier, poured forth the anguish of the heart in lamentable wails; and, what rendered the ceremony still more affecting, there were eulogists and musicians who deepened the sympathetic feelings of the occasion by a rehearsal of the virtues of the departed and by accompaniment of melancholy sounds.”*

The greatness of the concourse attending this funeral at Nain, showed the respect entertained for the afflicted family, and how wide was the sympathy felt in this particular case. The deceased had been an only son; his mother was a widow; and the mourning here, had the depth that can come only from such utter desolation as was hers. The Jewish dead were

* Jahn's *Archæology*. See also Matt. ix, 23, and xi, 17.

† Luke vii, 12.

always buried outside their towns : and the procession had now left the city gate,—a long line of mourners filling the evening air with their lamentations and cries. The corpse was borne on a couch, with the face uncovered, as was the custom in that country :—those calm, placid features, and that depth of appalling repose in the corpse, contrasting strongly with the agitations of the mourners and the loud cries and lamentations as the procession moved rapidly on.

Another large company had just been ascending the hill, and now came upon the mourning train, which it had stopped ; and that voice, which we have listened to so often,—those mild, gentle tones, so full also of the power of command, said to the mother,

“ Weep not.”

Christ had come that day from Capernaum, a distance of 20 or 25 miles, attended by his disciples and a large concourse of others, who now, as he stood by and touched the bier and the bearers stood still, all gathered round with an intensity of curiosity, and an excitement unequalled heretofore. Could he even raise the dead ? That was the thought filling every mind and depicted on every face around, as people gazed on the Messiah, and from him to the corpse so impassive there, while the lookers on were wrought up to the highest degree of emotion.

“ Young man, I say unto thee, arise.”—Christ had spoken.

—It was death no more. The chest heaved, the features relaxed, the eyes opened ; the marble paleness and rigidity had passed away. Life was there ; the true, breathing, active, perceptive life. The eyes had a bewildered, wondering expression, as if asking

what all this meant ; but the ear immediately recognized a mother's tones of joy :—

“ My son, my son !”

He sat up and began to speak ; and the crowd, freed from their deathlike stillness, sent up loud praises to God. They cried out, joyfully and confidently, “ A great prophet has risen among us :” “ God hath visited his people.”

Amid this scene of their rejoicing, there was a more touching spectacle, where the Messiah was delivering to the mother the young man, freed from the wrappings for the grave, and where her joy and gratitude were trying to find vent in broken words, and where she clasped her recovered son tightly to her heart, as if to feel, of a certainty, that it was all real, and as if she would thus secure herself from losing him again.

Far over all Galilee, and through all Judea, and even into the remote southern borders of Perea, went the report of this greatest of all possible miracles, stirring up, wherever it spread, hopes and often a belief, that God had visited his nation. But yet, even amid that flush of joy at Nain, and the cries of glory to God, even by that empty bier from which Christ had just raised the dead, the shout was about a *prophet* come, not about the Messiah. God, they believed, had not forgotten his people, and had sent them a great prophet ; but they kept their minds obstinately blinded against any Messiahship, except according to the old opinion, of their glory and dominion to be extended over all the world.

The rumor of this scene, and the rejoicings and hopes it gave rise to, reached away down to the

castle of Macherus, John's place of strict confinement, where the vengeance of the tyrant ruler and his wicked wife had never once relaxed. John had still disciples, who were allowed to visit him ; and they came now and told him of what had occurred at Nain.* He had, at this time, been about a year in prison, and the long confinement had worn on the spirit of the bold and ardent man. It must have been to him, indeed, a very wearisome time ; and often and often he had thought, during his confinement, of the sensual tyrant, revelling in power and luxury, and enjoying freedom, while he, the man of God, was left seemingly deserted of all aid, human or divine. Doubts of God's goodness mix up with such thoughts as these, and have to be repelled by a powerful and active faith ; but often, in spite of faith, they will yet return. If Jesus was the Messiah,—so the Baptist might have queried,—why was he, John, left deserted, to pine away in solitude and confinement ? There was the power of wonderful miracles ; why was it not exercised for him, the messenger sent to prepare the way ? Jesus had raised the dead ; why was there no word to set him, the living, free ? There was no feeling of rivalry or envy in John, and had not ever been ; but his was a condition where the soul pines and loses force under its long restraints, and where its own thoughts and its chafed feelings sometimes become its worst tormentors. The various reports about Christ ; the questions started by the Rabbis ; the objections from the poverty of appearance and simplicity of life in Jesus ; the general disposition through the land to receive

him only as a great prophet;—all this must have reached John,—perhaps in distorted rumors; and the gloom of confinement is always fruitful in doubt. So, calling two of his disciples, he sent them to Jesus, with the simple but pertinent question—

“Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?”

The Messiah made no immediate reply, when the message was delivered; and the messengers wondering at his silence, stood aside to look on the spectacle now presenting itself. It seems to have been at Capernaum;* but wherever it was, the sick and afflicted were now coming around him, and he was healing all who came. Among them were numerous blind men,† groping, stumbling, pushing their way among the crowd, with the energy of the great hope that was in them, and with their plaintive cry to Christ for help. It was, indeed, an exciting scene;—the crowds of applicants; the anxiety and sympathy of friends; the pathetic earnestness of all; the gladness and rejoicings of the relieved; the wonder of the blind, as sight was given; their exclamations at what they saw; their earnest gazings on that face, all radiant with the divine benevolence; their thanks and praises, shouted out in return for this blessing, as the strange scenes of life were all developed to their eyes; as turning their sight everywhere, upon earth, and sky, and lake, and upon the loved face of friends, and upon the gazing crowds around, and then back again upon the Messiah, they drank in the joys of their new and wonderful life.

The disciples of John looked on and saw it all;

* Inference from Matt. xi, 23.

† Luke vii, 21.

and they heard, from the crowds, of similar miraculous cures of other afflictions : and now, the Messiah calling them, charged them to go and report to their Master what they had witnessed and heard ; and, also, that “ to the poor the gospel is preached.” No word of censure on John for his doubts ; but only this declaration, “ Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.”*

Was this all ?—So these messengers might have said, as they went on their long journey back to John’s gloomy prison-house at Macherus. What they had seen and heard was decisive as to the Messiahship ; but could there be no token of deliverance for John himself ? no hope to be carried back to the prisoner, so wearied, so worn, and so sad ? not one word from this great, loving, soul of Christ, so full of benevolence to all around him, so ready to help the abject ? no cheering hope to their master of earthly help from him ? There was none. And thus it ever is in the mysteries of God : often he seems to leave us deserted, even when we look most for his help : but, “ *Blessed are they whosoever are not offended in him.*”

John’s life was, however, now close to a tragic end. The deadly hate of the wife of Herod had never lost sight of him : and she feared also the influence he might have on the Tetrarch, who, in his heart, respected and honored the Baptist,† both as a man and prophet. At the first of his confinement she had tried to instigate the tyrant to have him executed ;‡ but a fear of John, and of the influence he had over the people, restrained him : but, suddenly, now an opportunity offered, of which she immediately availed herself. Herod, on his

* Luke vii, 23.

† Mark vi, 20.

‡ Ib. 19.

birth-day, gave a great supper to his lords and captains, and chief estates of Galilee ; and, when all were inflamed with wine, the daughter of this woman came in and danced for the amusement of the company. The dancing in the east, unlike what it is with us, is a slow and graceful posturizing, with a gentle movement of the arms and body : and it is often, also, lascivious. It is seldom that any woman of rank or dignity takes part in it ; and among the Jews, it was also highly indecorous for a woman, to appear at any time before strangers without being veiled : but, in this case, all seems to have been forgotten in the madness of the hour ; and, in that madness the Tetrarch, in return for the exhibition of herself, swore to give her what she might ask, even if it should be the half of his kingdom. The oath was before all the lordly company : and the girl, with high gratification, withdrew immediately to consult with her mother as to what she should demand. The fiendish woman sprung at the opportunity ; and told her to require the head of John the Baptist in a charger. The demand was made ; and a feeling of horror passed through the company. The king would have canceled his promise ; but, it was made so publicly, and in the presence of such high officers, that pride and the fear of incurring ridicule, forbade it : and the order for execution, as she had required, was given. The head of John was delivered in a salver to the girl, and from her to her mother.

The disciples of John came and received the body and buried it ; and then passed on to Galilee to communicate the circumstance to the Messiah.

How many of such mysteries of human life remain, to be cleared up when the great day of reckoning shall

come, and Christ shall sit for the eternal judgment ! In the meantime, we walk by faith, and not by sight ; and, amid seeming incongruities in providences, we have the words still repeated down from the old times, "*Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TWO DINNERS.—HEALINGS.—NAZARETH, &C.

The Scribes and Pharisees were perplexed by the miracles of Christ. There were so many of these, so open to the critical inspection of all, enemies as well as friends, and so decided in their nature, that there was no caviling respecting the facts themselves ; and yet there was a set purpose in the minds of these men, not to believe. If they should believe, then so much of ambition, and hope of triumph over national enemies, and of personal aggrandizement, would have to be entirely relinquished ;—it seemed to them to be almost demanded by patriotism that they should reject Christ's claims to the Messiahship. If they should accept him, the sun in their political firmament would be quenched in darkness never to end. But the miracles were too obvious to be gainsayed : and, moreover, these were affecting the public sentiment respecting him, and people were universally considering him a great prophet, if nothing more. The Pharisees felt that they must controvert this. When men once be-

gin to wish to advocate error the expedients for it readily present themselves: and soon after the events of the last chapter, we are presented with an example of this. The Messiah was again passing through all Galilee, "preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God,"* and there was brought before him "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb," whom he healed, so that the man both spake and saw. There was a cry of admiration from the spectators, "Is not this the son of David?" all which soon reached the ears of the Pharisees.

"This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils," was their immediate response: but Christ argued with them that, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation," and that, "if satan cast out satan, he is divided against himself;" and he, then, in a train of terrible warning respecting such sin as theirs, added, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. * * O brood of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the *heart* the mouth speaketh."†

Soon after this he was invited by a Pharisee to dine in his house, and he went: but he found himself there in the midst of an assembly,—Pharisees and Scribes and Lawyers,—from whose presence nothing but hostility could be expected. In those countries, for a

* Luke viii, 1.

† Matt. xii, 22-34.

man to invite another to break bread with him is to place the latter, at once, under the protection of the host, who is bound then to defend him, if necessary, even with his life; and in all nations, persons who invite a stranger to dinner are expected by the rules of hospitality, to have the company at least not hostile to the guest. The Messiah, on looking around in this room, could see faces in which enmity, if concealed for the present, was ready at any moment, to break forth: for they were the class of men who had already leagued with the Herodians for his destruction.

At the outset, the captious spirit of his host was displayed, because the guest had not conformed to a Jewish practice, proper to some extent, but which the Pharisees had inwrought into their system of traditional law, so as to give it prominence among those things making religion consist in external observances of their own prescription, and not in the heart. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash,* they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots and brazen vessels and tables." On another occasion than the present, when Christ was upbraided with the practice of his disciples on this subject, he replied, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and

* For their silly rules in this washing, see p. 184 of this book.

cups ; and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses saith, Honor thy father and thy mother ; and whosoever curseth father or mother, let him die the death ; but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban [devoted to God], that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me ; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or mother ; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered ; and many such like things do ye.”*

Such was the system upheld by the individuals whom Christ beheld around him now, at this dinner, and by one of whom—his host—he was immediately caviled at, for not conforming to one of those traditional rules. His reply was direct and pointed : “ Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter ; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. * * * Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.”

—“ Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.”

The speakers were the lawyers present, men whose business in life it was to expound the unwritten law. He turned to them :

“ Woe unto you also, ye lawyers ! for ye lade man with burdens grievous to born, and ye touch not the burden with one of your fingers. * * Woe unto you, lawyers ! for ye have taken away the key of

knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

But the scene presently became a vociferous one; for the Scribes and Pharisees "began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him."*

On his return to the Lake of Galilee, the multitudes still pressing about him in great numbers,† he sought refuge, as on a former occasion, in a vessel by the shore, and taught them thence, making his teachings, as was very often the case, in parables.‡ A parable is "an allegorical representation of something in real life, or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction," and was a mode of teaching common in that country so fond of figurative language. In the evening he directed the vessel to be launched out, so as to proceed to the other side; and tired out, he sank into profound sleep at the stern. One of those sudden squalls to which the lake is subject came rushing down from the mountains: the waves came surging into the boat, till it was near foundering, when the disciples awoke him: "Master, Master, we perish." He rebuked the wind and water, and there was a calm. They said to each other, "What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him."

On the eastern shore he healed two demoniacs, who had been "exceedingly fierce, so that no man might pass by that way."

* Luke xi, 37-54.

† Matt. xiii, 1, 2.

‡ Luke xii, 1-59; xiii, 1-9; Mark xiii, 1-53.

When he had returned to the western side of the lake, a great feast was made for him by Levi, (Matthew), under far different circumstances from those at the Pharisee's house ; for his fellow-guests were also the despised and outcast members of society—publicans and sinners, “for they were many, and they followed him.” They were invited in to the feast ; and Matthew, it will be remembered, had been himself a publican. The prying eyes of the Scribes and Pharisees followed him here ; and these men came now to his disciples with indignation, “How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners ?” Christ himself had been looking on the guests with gentleness and tenderness of regard ; for they were men whose ears were open to truth, and their very outcast position in society made them draw near to him who was ever the friend of the lowly. He answered, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick ; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

We pause here for a moment, to contrast his life, (as we have also just contrasted his teachings,) with the life of Hillel and Shammai, the most famous Rabbis of that age, but who, as we are told by Jost, “mingled so little with the actions of their times that they became mythical personages.” The Messiah lived before the public, mingled with the poor and despised ; yet his purity never soiled ; and the Divinity within him never lowered by this constant intercourse with the humble in life.

Once more, after this feast with Levi, came an urgent appeal for help : this one from a Jewish ruler, a father, who hurried to Christ and worshipped him.

"My daughter is even now dead ; but come and lay thine hand on her, and she shall live."

The Messiah went ; and, on the way, a woman long diseased, who touched but the hem of his garment, was healed. In the ruler's house he restored the daughter to life.

He had passed out again, and was on his way along the street, when there was raised after him a loud and most plaintive cry—

"Thou Son of David, have mercy on us !"

The words seem to be almost ringing in our ears, so true they are to nature, like the language of earnestness in entreaty, and so sad from suffering. They were from two blind men, who had been informed that Jesus was passing, and who fearing to lose a moment, raised the cry.

He made no immediate response ; but they continued after him with the plaintive appeal, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" and they followed him into the house. He said to them,

"Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

"Yea, Lord."

"According to your faith be it unto you ;" and he touched their eyes. Light flashed in : they saw : their extasy was loud.

"See that no man know it," he said to them ; but they knew not how to be silent, and went proclaiming their joy and the deed all abroad.

Yet, with all this fame of miracles wrought throughout Galilee, where men had glorified God everywhere, for his having come, the Messiah was, at this period, rejected again at Nazareth, even although this town

was but a short distance (eight miles) from Nain, where he had recently given life to the dead.

He was now making a third circuit through Galilee, visiting all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching "the gospel of the kingdom," healing every sickness and every disease among the people."* He came to Nazareth in his journey, and again, as usual, went to their synagogue on the Sabbath day to preach. The citizens crowded there, as before, full of curiosity; and were puzzled and greatly perplexed. They looked and listened with astonishment, as words of power fell from his lips, and as they witnessed the greatness of the being before them, in that depth of wisdom, and that extent of knowledge of Divine things which was shown in his discourse:—this preaching also upheld by such miraculous powers as rumor had brought to their ears, and which many of them may have witnessed themselves. Yet, with a pertinacity which only a determined and set jealousy could produce, they clung to the old ideas and said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda, and of Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" Swayed back and forth during this discourse; one way by the power of his words, by his quiet majesty of manner, and by that strange, singular Presence which forced the acknowledgment from enemies, that "Never *man* spake like this man;" and then, carried again into the opposite, by the humble circumstances of his bringing-up, they settled at last into offence at his claims; and he left them; nor does

it seem probable that he ever again returned to Nazareth.

"A prophet," he said, "is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." He laid his hands there on a few sick persons and healed them.

But the work of teaching was more than one individual could perform, unless his presence was miraculously multiplied, so large was the field of labor, and the necessity for teaching so great; for ideas had to be, again and again, repeated in the ears of people so long misled by false teachings, and made obtuse by the Pharisaic absurdities. Therefore the Messiah now paused in his course to prepare his twelve apostles, and to send them out to teach, with power also to heal. They were not to excite the prejudices of their own Jewish people, at present, by teaching beyond their own nation; the time for a far wider mission being not yet come. They were to go out, two together, and in simple manner, trusting in God for what, in respect to food and shelter, might be needed on the way; and with a still higher trust in him, if they should be brought before governors and kings for their Master's sake. The Spirit of God was to be in them, and to help them in all such trials. What was to be their reward? Honors and applauses? No; but, on the contrary, they were to be hated of all men for his name's sake. They were to *endure*. That was to be their lot, *endurance*; and this to the end: and, after life was over, then was to be their reward. People had called him Beelzebub, "the prince of devils," giving him, in this rank of evil spirits, a contemptuous term applied by the Jews to Satan, as the

author of all pollutions and abominations in heathen worship: and "how," he said, "could they, his disciples, hope to escape?" But in all this they were to be strengthened and supported from on high; and, finally, their reward would come. They were to go in the loftiest heroism, both physical and moral; and must not dare to shrink from duty. "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Such were their instructions and the admonitions and warnings given: thus he sent them forth,—the first ministers of his word.

CHAPTER XX.

"LET US MAKE HIM A KING."

THE rumors of what Christ was doing had reached the royal palace, and were now creating great perplexity among its inmates. The base tyrant was far from feeling at ease after the death of John; for the murder had left behind it, in the royal actors in that scene, a guilty conscience and its attendant alarms.

The sensation was increased by a rumor that John was risen from the dead; for that was the belief of some in the palace, when they heard of these wonderful scenes in Galilee; their guilty fears at once suggesting that he had come back, perhaps, to be an avenger in their midst; others said that it was

Elijah restored from the dead ; and some of them, more indefinitely, that " one of the old prophets was risen again."

Herod said, " John have I beheaded ; but who is this of whom I hear such things ?" and he desired to have a sight of the individual causing such a sensation throughout the land.* He was not gratified, however, at this time.

The twelve now returned to the Messiah at Capernaum, giving an account of what, during their recent mission, they had done and taught.

They found such multitudes about him, that he had not opportunity for even the needed refreshment of food. Crowds were coming and going continually, and making constant demands upon his time and energies ; and nature became now quite exhausted, and could endure it no longer. He could refuse no one coming thus with earnest appeals to his sympathies and kindness ; but rest was absolutely needed for his human frame ; and, therefore, having directed his disciples to have a boat prepared privately, he sought the requisite retirement, by crossing the lake towards its north-eastern shore.

But the crowds followed. Some of the company had recognized him in the boat, when leaving the city ; and the multitudes passing round the head of the lake, were soon gathered about him once more on the other side. His sympathies were deeply stirred by their earnestness, and his compassion moved by their moral destitution ; " for they were as sheep not having a shepherd." Having had some rest in the boat, he recommenced there both his teaching

and healing. For the sick had also continued to reach this place, having helped themselves along, or been borne by friends.

The mountains east of the lake have already been described as rising in green rapid slopes ; and these appear to have been more a pastoral region than the western side. But, on this occasion, the slopes were quickly covered by a crowd amounting to 5,000 men, besides women and children,* all actuated by the deepest earnestness, as they had shown by having followed him so far. To persons with such a feeling, the Messiah's kindness and tenderness were ever open ; and he continued his instructions and his healing till a late hour in the afternoon. His disciples then came to him and said :

"This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed : send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread ; for they have nothing to eat." He answered :

"They need not depart ; give ye them to eat." The disciples were astonished at the order.

"We have here but five loaves and two fishes," they said.

"Bring them hither to me."

They were brought ; and he directed the disciples to make the people sit down in companies on the grass. He took the bread and fishes ; and, looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake the loaves, and gave the food to his disciples ;—the disciples then distributing it about among the hungry people. They ate abundantly, the food seemingly exhaustless ; for

it never failed in that unstinted meal : and afterwards, when all were satisfied, by his orders, what remained was gathered up, making twelve baskets of fragments.*

Astonishment took possession of all the multitude, for they knew how scant had been the first supply, and by what a miraculous power it had been increased : and, as they had sat there on the grass, their eyes ranging over the thousands so fully satisfied, their feelings took words, and by and by these words began to have a singular purpose. The scene brought to their minds what they had read concerning the bountiful supply afforded by Jehovah himself to their forefathers on the deserts of Arabia. Here was a similar miraculous provision of food ; what was left, after feeding so many thousand, being even more abundant than the original quantity. The visible power of God seemed to have come down into their nation once more. Why not recognize it ? they thought and said. They had been listening, that afternoon, to teachings such as had never been heard from any one on earth before, so pure, so godlike : they had gazed with affection mingled with awe, on those features where a divine love seemed to be enthroned : they had seen this person receiving the diseased with such readiness and gentleness : and had seen them, after they had been healed, dismissed with such words of kindness, that their hearts were all in harmony with their mental convictions, as they said to each other, " This is, of a truth, the Prophet that should come into the world."

But they went further. Enthusiasm is contagious ;

* Mark vi, 31-44.

and it is apt to be progressive. Daniel had spoken of the Messiah as THE PRINCE, and their whole nation, and even foreign nations, had been expecting a mighty king. Here was the Messiah now among them.—"Let us make him a king!"

He had been so humble in his mode of life, and so retiring and unambitious, that they must act for him,—so they thought,—and put him into the high place which the prophet had designated for him, and for which he was so qualified. With Jesus for king, what might not their nation become? Such wisdom, such majesty, such power over the laws of nature, even creative power in his hands, all seemingly only waiting to be raised to that dignity of rank which was their right! There might be resistances from Herod; but that Tetrarch was already trembling with imaginary fear in his palace. There would doubtless be hostility from the Roman government; but what government, or what array of arms, could withstand such power as was ever resting quietly in their Messiah, waiting for exercise? There would be acquiescence on the part of their Scribes and Pharisees, when they once saw that the glory and dominion of their nation was to be the result. So the multitude could readily argue; and thus the excitement on that mountain-side increased, till whispers turned into outspoken words, and words into open demonstration; and presently there was evidence that they were coming to take the Messiah "by force, to make him a king."*

But his kingdom was to be of a far different nature from that;—one in the hearts of redeemed men, and

* John vi, 15.

to be eternal : and knowing the intentions of the multitude, he quieted and dismissed them before they could commit themselves into the eyes of the authorities ; and then “departed again into the mountain himself alone,”* for communion with heaven.

He had previously sent his disciples back to the vessel, with directions to proceed across to Capernaum. The night closed over them upon the lake ; and they soon began to long ardently for him, whose presence had always given them assurance in every trial. For the night was stormy, and the wind directly ahead ; and their boat was tossed about in the heavy sea.† They had rowed through most of the night,‡ and they were still only about half way across the lake,§ worn out by rowing ; when suddenly they saw what seemed to be some one walking on the water and approaching them. Fright seized them, and they thought it an apparition ; but they were quickly reassured by the well-known voice of the Messiah :

“Be of good cheer : it is I : be not afraid.”

One of them,—the impulsive Peter—cried out :

“Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water ;” and he was bidden. He was on the sea immediately : and, just as Christ has often been to others, so he was to Peter, treating him according to his faith.

Soon the heavy waves beginning to dash high against the disciple, who had been so far walking safely on the water, he forgot that the power which could make him walk at all, could sustain him in the heaviest seas ;

* See Mark vi, 33-44 ; John vi, 1-16. † Matt. xiv, 25.

‡ The Jews had now adopted the Roman mode of reckoning, and the fourth watch commenced at 3 o'clock.

§ John vi, 19.

his faith gave way, and losing it, he lost the Saviour's help, and began to sink. We need not censure the disciple: for we ourselves, in our trials, often forget that God's arm is just as strong for us in rough weather as in mild, and then we also begin to sink. He cried for assistance, and the outstretched arm of Christ held him up, while the Master, in gentle reproof, said:

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The storm ceased when they reached the vessel; and the disciples, falling in worship before the Messiah, exclaimed:

"Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

They landed at Gennesaret; and, as soon as it was known that he was there, news was spread through all the country adjacent: and, quickly, the diseased were carried in beds, and laid in the street that, as he went by, they might but touch the hem of his garment. All who touched were healed.* So, also, wherever he went through the villages or cities or country, the sick, too numerous to have special cases attended to, were brought by willing friends, and placed in a similar manner; and, as he passed by them, and they touched his garment, they found their health restored.†

It must seem strange that people should run into the extreme, one day, of wishing to force the Messiah to be king, through admiration of him; and that the next day, in consequence of his teaching, even many of his disciples should desert him;—the desertion so general, indeed, that he said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter spoke up, quickly, in reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou

* Matt. xiv, 34-36.

† Mark vi, 50.

art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The discourse that gave such umbrage was delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum;* and contains passages in which profound spiritual matters are figuratively introduced—subjects at which captious persons might take offence. Perhaps the audience were captious in consequence of their disappointment the day previous, and disposed to avenge themselves for their high-wrought but unsuccessful enthusiasm on that occasion. It is a part of our natures to run into extremes.

Passing now beyond the boundary of Palestine on the north, he healed there the daughter of a Syrophenecian woman; but soon afterwards returning, he went to the region south-west of the Lake of Tiberias; and, in the brief narrative of the Gospels, we again perceive him on one of the solitary mountains of this district: but it was not solitary now. Not far off were most of the cities of Decapolis, and the fame of the Messiah had been spread over all the country; and, soon, great multitudes had come to him, "having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, and maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them."†

There comes up before us a scene of uncommon beauty and interest, as we read of those healings on the mountain; where the blind, restored to sight, saw him whom their eyes immediately sought, sitting there, fitly vaulted over by the dome of heaven, and, in his grandeur of Presence, suited to be the centre of those wide surroundings of nature,—the great temple of nature not made with hands; where, in the ex-

* John vi, 22-71.

† Matt. xv, 30.

ercise of Divine power through love to men, he showed himself to be the fitting Deity. What gladness there was around him as the lately maimed and halt found that they were so no longer ; as the lately dumb broke forth in joyful exclamations, carrying with them the sympathies of all persons ; as the lately blind glanced at the varied sights of grandeur and beauty on every side, but ever turned their eyes quickly to rest them, in reverence and love, on him whose face seemed to be reflecting heaven over our earth !

But the multitudes lingered, "all glorifying the God of Israel,"* until at last, as in a former case, there was danger of suffering from hunger ; the Messiah, calling his disciples, expressed his compassion, adding,

"I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."

"Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to feed so great a multitude?" they asked ; for the number was 4000 men, besides women and children.

"How many loaves have ye?" They answered,

"Seven, and a few small fishes."

He directed the people to be seated, as on the former occasion ; and, having given thanks, he broke the bread and gave the food to his disciples for distribution to the hungry multitude. When all were satisfied, seven baskets of fragments yet remained.†

* Matt. xv, 31.

† Matt. xv, 29-38 ; Mark viii, 1-9.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

In the extreme north of Palestine, at the foot of the snow-crowned Hermon, and among the broken ridges which surround its base, the waters of a large fountain, called Banias, burst from a cave, and form at once a stream of considerable size. This is one of the three sources of the Jordan. At an early period, the cave, the large fountain, and the picturesque country around, overtopped by the Hermon, made this spot a much frequented resort. Near it, on an elevated table land, which is bounded by ravines and precipitous descents, stood a city of ancient date, but much enlarged and embellished by Philip, son of Herod the Great, and the present Tetrarch of Batanea, Trachonitis and Auranitis,* to whom, in the division of Herod's kingdom, this district had fallen. He had thought the enlarged city worthy of the name of his patron, Tiberius Cæsar ; and Philippi, from his own name, was added to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea on the Mediterranean, and present political capital of Judea. So this was called Cæsarea Philippi.

The Messiah, after having dismissed the multitudes congregated on the mountain in Decapolis, returned to the western side of the lake, from which he passed northwardly towards the region above described. There lacked now only about nine months of the time

* Luke iii, 1.

of his crucifixion : and during this journey, he appears to have wished the twelve, for their own sakes and for future purposes, to make demonstrations before each other of their opinions respecting himself. They had been thrown everywhere into the society of doubting and captious men ; and had heard the Pharisees and Doctors make objections, and quote authorities ; and had witnessed their rancorous hostility, increasing every day. He wished the twelve to make it manifest to each other whether they were infected or not : and he put the question to them—

“ Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am ? ”—they answered :

“ Some say that thou art John the Baptist ; some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets ? ”

“ But whom say ye that I am ? ” Peter answered :

“ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ”

“ Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,” said the Messiah : and he then proceeded to give to that disciple a prominence of position in his future church.* The frank, prompt, generous nature of Peter had much in it that was attractive, with all the weakness and timidity which he sometimes displayed.

All physical and moral qualities in them were, indeed, after a while, to pass through terrible ordeals : and Christ had warned them at the very outset of their apostleship, that they should be delivered up to the councils, and be scourged in their synagogues, and be brought before kings and governors for his sake ; adding also, what was the hardest of all, to bear,

* Matt. xvi, 13-20.

“Ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.”

The remainder of that discourse is startling for its positiveness, and its exacting nature ; and it presents to us Christ,—not tame, as people often imagine him to have been, but decided ; and not only firm in present purpose, but drawing a terrible impressiveness from future scenes. He had said, “He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.”

On this present occasion he said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels ; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they shall see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

Was he exacting ? Principle is always exacting. Patriotism is exacting. Love to one’s country requires the mother and father to give their son, the daughter to give her brother or her husband, to the battle-field and to death, if this be necessary. Why should religion be less decided in its demands than these ? The Messiah had just been telling his disciples “how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suf-

fer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day ;” and he was not only himself filled, but he was trying to fill them also, with the greatness of the work he came to perform, and which it was to be their duty to advance. Religion such as this is full of the grandest of all thoughts and all emotions ; has them for its groundwork, and they make an essential part of itself.

The grandeur and glory of heaven is, in such thoughts and feelings, given to the earth : and while listening to such words from Christ, we are readily prepared for what came soon afterwards,—the scene of the transfiguration.

Six days subsequently to the discourse related above, he took Peter, and James John, and conducted them “into a high mountain apart.” The scene which followed there is one which painters have very often tried to depict, but always without success ; for how can any one represent the glory of heaven impressing itself on aught of earth : least of all can they do it, as here shining out through Christ. We are told that when Moses came down from receiving the law on Sinai, his face shone, so that Aaron, and all the children of Israel, shrunk away in amazement, and “they were afraid to come nigh him.” He was himself not aware of the wonderful glory in his face, till he saw their fright as if something supernatural were before them ; and, afterwards, “he put a veil on his face,”* and repeated this, after every subsequent descent from the presence of God. When Stephen was before the council at Jerusalem, all that sat there “looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had

* Exodus xxxiv, 29-35.

been the face of an angel :”* and both this event, and

* Acts vi, 15.—The reader has perhaps heard of death-bed scenes, where the face of the departing one has been suddenly lighted up, and has taken expressions, as if the spirit about to be released was reflecting the heavenly glory already so near at hand.

The author of this book has lately witnessed a very wonderful scene of this description, which he will here briefly sketch :—A husband, feeble as an infant, in a sudden illness, and thought to be near to death :—in another chamber, in the same house, his wife also ill, and about to die. She had, when at a distance, been informed of his condition, and hastened on to nurse him ; but in consequence of the fatigue of the journey operating on an already feeble frame, was herself immediately stricken down with a rapid disease. She was a person who, through life, had always seemed to belong rather to heaven than to earth ; so pure, so true, so lovely she was, so great in all excellence. It was the Sabbath, at night, a few days after her illness had commenced. She recognized in herself the approach of death, and asked to be carried to her husband’s room. The request was met with remonstrance, but she persisted :—“ You would not prevent a dying wife from going to take a last farewell of her husband ?” She was put into a large easy chair, and thus carried and placed by his bedside. Many messages had passed between them during the day ; but they now met ; and it was in this brief meeting that this wonderful scene occurred. Her face and all its expressions became angelic—just like a reflection of heaven itself ;—there was a transfiguration,—an effulgence over all the features amazing to behold. Six other individuals were present, all of mature years, and this remarkable change was noticed by every one of them. Both of the sick persons were incapable of saying much, but she uttered a few words of blessing and of farewell. She sat there, a heavenly brightness and joy on her face, looking like a seraph ready to take the upward flight. This lasted about twelve minutes, at the end of which time her weakness compelled them to remove her to her own apartment. When placed again on her bed, she made an audible prayer, the breathings of which seemed not to belong to earth. Then the forecloudings of the approaching last scene overshadowed the mind ; and so continued for about 24 hours, when death came ; and, without a struggle, her spirit passed as if angels had gently carried it away.

that at Sinai, may aid us in our endeavor to comprehend the scene now in the region of Cæsarea Philippi. But they can lead us only to a partial appreciation of it: for what mortal can fully understand the event or the glory, when Heaven came down and enveloped the mountain top, and the Divinity in Christ glowed forth through his mortal frame, while Moses and Elias stood there beside him;—the veil between the two worlds withdrawn from before the apostles' vision, until the supernatural became revealed. There "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." The apostles were filled with mingled awe, and fear, and delight; and the impulsive Peter, in his tumult of thought, cried out with a request as if he might hope to make it all permanent. But such scenes belong permanently only to a world not stained with sin. A bright cloud overshadowed them; and from it proceeded a voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." The disciples fell prostrate, their faces to the earth, before Jehovah himself, felt to be present in this amazing scene; fear, now, filling their hearts. From this overwhelming agitation, they were restored by the touch and voice of him who still is between the terrors of the Unknown and us, and who says still to us when prostrate, as he did to them, "Arise, and be not afraid." When they arose, and "had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." He charged them not to make these circumstances known until after his rising from the dead.*

CHAPTER XXII.

DISPUTES AMONG THE APOSTLES.

ON their return, the following day, to where the other apostles had been left, these were found undergoing an examination by the Scribes ; a great multitude of people also being around, who, as soon as Christ was seen, hurried to him with glad salutations. Immediately a father was on his knees before him crying for compassion on his only child, a lunatic, whom he had brought to the disciples and presented in vain, to be healed.—But now there was hope, for the Messiah himself was there, and his power was equal to the cure. With a reproof to his hearers for their want of faith, he directed the child to be brought before him ; and he turned to the beseeching parent :—

“ If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

“ Lord, I believe : help thou mine unbelief,” cried the father, with tears.

The helpless boy fell to the earth in a fit ; but the Messiah took him by the hand, and lifted him up ; and the happy father had him quickly in his arms entirely restored.*

They left that region for Galilee ; and as they travelled onward, the Messiah's mind was looking forward to the painful end of the journey at Jerusalem ; for he, who could work miracles for the relief

* Mark ix, 2-9.

of all others, must, in that frightful endurance on the cross, work none for himself; and the human nature in him, so mysteriously united to the Divine, had the full force of the anticipations of what was now soon to occur. Nevertheless, he went steadfastly on. He tried again to prepare his disciples, and repeated to them, that he should be betrayed to his enemies, and be put to death, and should rise again; but they did not understand him,* and the only effect was a deep sorrow, in which they felt too much awed to seek relief in questioning him on the subject, though it filled their hearts.

But even in this time of sadness, a most unseemly question was started among them,—who should be greatest in the approaching kingdom of their Master? and here we are again reminded how little in common there was between him and them, his chosen followers, and how solitary he was in the world. Man was formed for companionship, and the kind and loving nature of Christ was peculiarly fitted for its enjoyments; but there could be little companionship for him anywhere among the Jews, even among his followers themselves. In this respect he could emphatically say, “The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”

On their arriving at Capernaum, he called the apostles; and to his inquiry about their disputes, they made no reply, but stood silent and abashed. He took, then, a little child, and, setting him in the midst of them, he said:

“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, .

and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. * * He that is least among you all, the same shall be greatest."

The Messiah was now about to take his final leave of Galilee ; but, previous to his departure, he sent out from Capernaum seventy disciples to go before him, "into every city and place whither he himself should come." As he returned no more to this region, their mission was chiefly, it would seem, into the country east of the Jordan (Perea ;) where, and in Jerusalem, after this period, his time was chiefly spent. The seventy had nearly the same directions and the same authority as the twelve, on the former occasion, when sent through Galilee.

He was himself now going up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles ; and was about to pass permanently from the simplicity, and frankness, and generous nature in these rural districts, to the capital, and to a region of country over which its influence held sway ; and was to encounter, at almost every step, the superciliousness, and pride, and captiousness of the Pharisees, and Doctors, and Scribes.

The Messiah chose, for this journey to Jerusalem, the way through Samaria ; and in that country immediately occurred one of those incidents which showed the bitter hostility between its inhabitants and the Jews. He had sent messengers before him to one of their villages to make ready for his coming ; but the citizens of that place, when they found that he was going to Jerusalem, would not receive even him ; all regard and curiosity giving way before their

jealousy of the rival city and people. John, the most gentle of the disciples, was enraged at this treatment ; and he and James united in a request that the Messiah would allow them to call down fire from heaven to consume the place. The reply was, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

How soon were these disciples to witness far greater indignities offered to him in that city, which boasted that God had especially chosen it for himself!

They proceeded on their journey, and were entering another Samaritan town, when was heard that loud, plaintive appeal for help, now become familiar to the ears of his followers. The cry came from ten men, who stood far off ; since they did not dare to approach him, the laws of that country prohibiting it ;—for they were lepers. But, from that distance, the cry rang distinctly in his ear,—it was such an earnest, beseeching one :

"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

That disease, so loathsome and horrible in itself, had the further horror, of cutting off those afflicted with it from all relations and from home ; and it could never have the alleviations which, in other cases, sometimes almost make sickness feel like a luxury, so tenderly is it ministered to by friends. The leprous man could have companionship only with other horrible objects like himself ; and so these ten men stood together that day, isolated from all others, and raising their piteous cry. The Jewish laws, (Levit. xiii, 43-46,) said, "If the rising of the sore be white reddish, in his bald head or in his bald

forehead, as the leprosy approacheth in the skin of the flesh; he is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean: his plague is in his head. And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, 'Unclean, unclean.' All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled; he is unclean; and he shall dwell alone, without the court shall his habitation be."

A recent traveller in Palestine says, "In my walks about Zion to-day, I was taken to see the village or quarter assigned to the lepers lying along the wall directly east of Zion gate. I was unprepared for the visit, and was made positively sick by the loathsome spectacle." Meeting them also outside the city, he says, "they held up towards me their handless arms, unearthly sounds gurgled through their throats without palates—in a word, I was horrified."*

So, as Christ was entering this Samaritan village, how intensified was the cry of those ten men, as if all existence were centred in that moment of hope. It came from them broken, gurgling, distant, but was heard.

"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

The company around all turned with earnestness towards him. His disciples were Jews, and had the jealousy of Jews towards the people of this country. Would he perform his miraculous healing here, especially as they had just been rejected from one of the towns because they were of the race hated by this people, and were going to Jerusalem? The disciples, not yet recovered from their indignation, felt that here

would be a good opportunity, by refusing these people help, to impress upon them a lesson of hospitality to strangers travelling through their country. The villagers also were gathering, and watching to see how it would end ; and there was agitation and excitement on every side ; while, in the confusion incident to such curiosity, the sad cry from the lepers standing afar off was distinctly heard.

What was the result ? It was to be, here as elsewhere, according to the faith of the applicants : and, of this faith there was to be, first, an open demonstration. •

“ Go show yourselves unto the priests,” he said to them.

—They went ; and going, felt themselves healed. The terrible disease had disappeared from their system ; their eyes saw, on each other, and each on himself, the newly restored flesh, their skins clean ; they felt the new health coursing through their veins.—We might imagine them now, all aglow with gratitude, hurrying back to thank their Divine Restorer ; but history gives a different account. Only one returned for this purpose :—he was a Samaritan. He hurried back, glorifying God, and fell down on his face at the Messiah’s feet with expressions of thanks. The Saviour said, “ Were there not ten ? But where are the nine ? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.—Arise, go thy way : thy faith hath made thee whole.”*

• Luke xvii, 11-19.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JERUSALEM—FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

DURING the last of those scenes recorded in the preceding chapter, the Jews from all Palestine, and regions adjoining, and even from remote parts of the world, had been flocking towards Jerusalem. The * Feast of the Tabernacles, to which they were hastening, was their most cheerful festival, the *אָהַרְנָה*, *festivity* or *mirth*, called so by way of pre-eminence :—a time of great rejoicing ; all conducted in a manner and at a season to give a peculiar zest to their joy. The Pass-over was a season of more impressive solemnity : this feast of Tabernacles was a time more given up to mirth. Plutarch calls it a *bacchanalian season* ; but there was certainly neither drunkenness nor rioting in it, though it must be confessed that there were scenes in this festival that, to a person imperfectly informed, might easily appear like those in the drunken orgies of Bacchus.

The Rabbins were accustomed to say of this feast, " The man who has not seen these festivals, does not know what a jubilee is ;" and the Talmud, " Whoever hath not seen the rejoicing that was upon the drawing of this water, hath never seen any rejoicing at all."*

It was a double festival ; 1st, to commemorate the living in tents during the journeying of their forefathers from Egypt ;† and 2d, it was a thanksgiving

* Lightfoot.

† Leviticus xxiii, 42-43.

for the fruits of the year,* answering thus to *our own Thanksgiving Day*. The time corresponded to our October : the fruits and harvests had then been gathered in : a time of rest for the husbandman had come : the garnerers were full : hearts were ready for rejoicing : and so, at this season, all Galilee and Judea moved towards their great city, and their far greater temple, to have a week of festivity and worship, mingling religious devotion with the outpourings of the general joy. The people all lived, during that week, in booths made of branches of trees, erected on the flat house-tops of Jerusalem, or in the fields around the city ; great taste was exhibited in the construction of these booths : rains never troubled the country at this period : the habits of the people were simple, and there was no inconvenience to them in such an out-door life : it was a gathering, not of distinct families, but of the one great family of the nation ; and everybody came prepared to be happy, and to give outward demonstrations of joy.

We may imagine from our own yearly Thanksgiving Day, and the family gatherings on that occasion, what were the feelings of the Jews when the whole people, old and young, came up to their great national Thanksgiving, of divine institution, in which it was a duty to be joyful before God for the blessings of the year. No one, for seven days, was allowed to eat, or drink, or sleep outside of the booths, which, on the morning of the eighth day, were all removed ; although, still the eighth day was the chief one of the festival ; for it was the last, and they believed that upon the manner in which it was observed

* Ex. xxiii, 16.

depended the rains and crops for the ensuing year. During the seven days, supplications and sacrifices were offered for the whole world ; but the solemnities of the eighth day were wholly on their own behalf.

There was a place a little below Jerusalem, probably in the valley of the Kedron, where willows were cultivated for use in this festival ; for each individual was obliged to provide himself with what they called *the lulabb*, a bundle of two twigs of willows, three of myrtle, and a leaf of palm, tied together with a gold, or silver, or silken band ; also a willow branch to lay before the altar. When they went up to the daily ceremonies in the temple, they carried the *lulabb* in their right hand, and a pomecitron branch, with fruit on it, in the left. The children, from early age, were taught to sway the *lulabb*, and to join in the singing ; and, in their innocence and half serious gaiety, they formed an interesting part of the great scenes of this festival on the temple heights. The Talmud said : " A little child as soon as he knows how to wave a bundle is bound to carry a bundle." Prepared with these, the people came to the usual morning sacrifice, which was at the earliest dawn ; and this morning sacrifice itself had also a distinguishing feature, belonging only to this feast. Wine was always a part of the daily offering : but, now, a priest went to the pool of Siloam at the outlet of the Tyropeon valley, just below the temple, and, with pomp and ceremony, brought water from it in a golden vessel ; the trumpets sounding as he reached the great court of the temple. He proceeded up the inclined plane of the altar to where two basins

were standing, one with wine ; into the other he poured the water, and both fluids being then ceremoniously mixed, they were poured over the morning sacrifice, the trumpets and symbols sounding, while was sung, " With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," (Isaiah xii, 3.) This part of the solemnities did not profess to be of divine institution, but had been established of old, they said, in memory of the water so bountifully bestowed on their ancestors in the desert ; and, as the Rabbis testify, was meant to be a symbol of the benefits to be, sometime, poured out and dispensed by the Holy Spirit.*

When the libation was finished, and the smoke of the sacrifice began to ascend, the music recommenced ; and their great hymn, the Hallel, rose on the morning air from the voices of that immense throng in these greatly elevated courts of the temple. The great Hallel consisted of the cxiii, cxiv, cxv, cxvi, cxvii, and cxviii Psalms ; and when they came to the beginning of Psalm cxviii, " O give thanks," &c., the whole company waved their branches towards the four quarters of the world ; as they did, also, when they came to the " Hosanna," (or " Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord ") and again at the latter clause of the same verse, " O Lord, I beseech thee send now prosperity." The same shaking of the branch was repeated when they came to the last verse of that Psalm, " O give thanks unto the Lord ; for he is good : for his mercy endureth forever," and which was the finishing of the Hallel.

When this daily sacrifice was completed, then commenced the additional sacrifices peculiar to this occa-

* Bloomfield.

sion ; i. e., on each day fourteen lambs and a goat : on the first day also, thirteen bullocks ; on the second, twelve ; on the third, eleven, and so diminishing, till, on the seventh day seven bullocks were offered. At this sacrifice, hymns peculiar to it were also sung ; on the first day the cv Psalm ; on the second, the xxix ; third day, the l, beginning at v. 16 ; fourth day, xciv, at v. 16 ; fifth day, xciv, at v. 8 ; sixth day, lxxxi Ps., at v. 6 ; the seventh day, Ps. lxxxii, at v. 5 ; and we may very easily imagine the effect of the sound of so many thousands of voices on those temple heights, while the smoke of the sacrifices was curling upward, towards the open sky. Sometimes the voices ceased, and the trumpets and cymbals were substituted ; and then again the Hosannas burst forth, like the voice of a great ocean during a storm.* Every individual was required to go round the altar with his lulabb each day : on the seventh day seven times.

Thus it was during the day : but, in the evening, a very strange scene commenced ; and for this we will quote from Lightfoot, whose quaint language is so well suited to such descriptions.

“At the time when the water was brought from the pool of Siloam and poured on the altar, they had not the liberty for their jollity, because of the seriousness and solemnity of the service then in hand : but when all the services of the day were over and night had now come, they fall to their rejoicing for that matter, which rejoicing is equally strange both for the manner and the cause. The manner was thus :

“They went into the court of the women, and there

* Lightfoot : *Temple Service*.

the women placed themselves upon balconies round about the court, and the men stood on the ground. There were four candlesticks or beacons, of exceeding bigness, and mounted on exceeding great heights, overtopping the walls of the court of the 'Mountain of the House' at a great elevation. The pipe of the temple began to play, and many Levites with their instruments in great abundance, standing on the fifteen steps that went down out of the court of Israel into the court of the women : and whosoever of them and of the priests were musical, either with instrument or with voice, joined his music. In the meanwhile, the greatest grandees of the people, as the members of the Sanhedrim, the rulers of the synagogues, doctors of schools, and those that were of the highest rank and repute for place and religion, fell a dancing, leaping, singing and capering, with torches in their hands, with all their skill and might, whilst the women and common people looked on : thus they spent the most part of the night. And the more they abased themselves (like David before the ark) in this activity, the more they thought they did commendably, and deserved praise.

" At last, far in the night, two priests, standing at the gate Nicanor, do sound their trumpets ; and then come down to the tenth step and sound there again ; they come down into the court of the women and there sound for the third time ; and so go sounding all along the court, till they come to the east of it ; and there they turn themselves and look back up towards the temple and say thus, ' Our fathers who were in this place turned their backs upon the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, to-

wards the sun, but as for us we are towards him and our eyes towards him.'

"As the grandees danced, some of them would say thus, 'Blessed be thou, O my youth, which hast not shamed my old age;' and these were called 'Men of performance;' and others would say, 'Blessed be thou, O my old age, which has gained my youth: these were 'Men of repentance;' and both of them would say, 'Blessed is he that hath not sinned, and who that hath sinned, and his sin is pardoned.' /

"At length, weariness and sleepiness and satiety with their mirth, concludes the jollity, till another night. * * * This was the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles, day after day, only there was this difference among the days: that on the night before the Sabbath that fell within the feast, and on the night before the eighth day, which was a holy-day, they used not their dancing, singing and rejoicing. On the 8th day they had the same solemnities with the days before, ate the pome-citrons, which they might not do before, and at night had the great rejoicing in the court of the women, and thus they concluded the feast: and, therefore, this by the Evangelist is called not only the last day, but also the *great* day of the feast, because it was a holy-day, and because it was the conclusion."*

A very strange scene surely; and if we now suppose ourselves on the Mount of Olives, which looked directly down upon the temple area and the whole city; upon the lighted-up booths on the tops of the houses and over the whole country around; upon the immense columns at each angle of the women's court,

with the blazing fires on their summit ; and on the torches of the dancers waving to and fro, and circling about in intricate lines ; and then listen to the murmur from more than two millions of wakeful people at the festival, mingled with the sounds of musicians and singers on the temple steps, we shall have a tolerably fair idea of what this great festival of Tabernacles must have been.

The great Jewish authority, Maimonides, says of this dancing : “ Because it was the rejoicing for keeping the law, to which no joy can be comparable : ” and, therefore, he adds, “ the common people and every one that would were not actors in this rejoicing ; for they neither sang nor danced,” but were only spectators : but the actors were the great men of wisdom and religion.*

A remarkable passage occurs in the Talmud respecting this festival. “ Rabbi Levi saith, ‘ Why is the name of it called drawing of water ? Because of the drawing or pouring out of the Holy Ghost ; according as it is said, With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ ”

Such were the scenes at the Feast of Tabernacles, repeated, day after day, for seven days, with the slight exceptions above noticed ; and it was evidently a time of great hilarity, mixed with so much of a religious character as to give, in their minds, a sanction to great enjoyment. They felt it a duty to enjoy the present with thankfulness for the past ; while, also, from the solemnities of the eighth day, they might look for blessings on the coming year.

* See Lightfoot—*Temple Service*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MESSIAH AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

“WHERE is he?”

The number of people, estimated by Josephus, to be usually present at a Passover feast was, as already stated, two millions, seven hundred thousand;* and we may suppose that it could not be much less on such an occasion as this. The temple ceremonies occupied but a small portion of their time; and great sociability must have prevailed amid so large an assembly. We may easily suppose what was the universal theme; and the great variety of forms in which it was discussed.

The Messiah had not yet made his appearance there; for such scenes as those described in our last chapter could have little attraction for him, and he had resisted the solicitations of his kinsmen in Galilee to go up early to the feast. These last “did not believe in him;”† for “a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country;” and the claims of the Messiah must have been startling to his own connexions, as we know they were to the people generally in Nazareth. We of our time, who know what has been the operation of his doctrines through eighteen centuries, and who can compare them with those of all other teachers, and see how pure, how perfect, and how God-like they are; and can trace,

* Bel. vi, 9, § 3.

† John vii, 5.

also, the greatness of his life down to the wonderful self-sacrifice in its close ; and who, also, are free from the Jewish prejudices of that day, and their extravagant expectations respecting the Messiah, may wonder at the obstinate resistance to Christ, and especially to the force of all those miracles wrought before their eyes. But we know how the Pharisees parried off this last ; and we must remember how cramped was the Jewish mind, how narrow their intellectual horizon, and how enslaved by fear the largest portion of them were to men ruling by the power of that mysterious, undefinable *unwritten law* :—those rulers denounced by Christ as “hypocrites ;” “for,” he said, “ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte ; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

At this feast were two sets of men, putting the question, “Where is he ?”—the rulers, who did so openly ; and the multitudes, who, through fear of them,* “murmured† concerning Christ,” giving, in suppressed tones, their opinions : some saying, “He is a good man ; others, ‘Nay ; but he deceiveth the people.’” There was among both classes an anxiety concerning him ; in the rulers, mingled with great fear as to what his influence on this vast, excitable multitude might become ; among the people, an intense desire to decide, respecting him, by what their own eyes might see. The people from Galilee brought astonishing rumors of the miracles performed in their country, very great in number, and wonderful in char-

* John vii, 13.

† The word *Γογγυσμός*, translated murmuring, means literally a *buzzing*, very significant of their low tones in this conversation.

acter, which were here detailed in low tones ; the very caution used lest the rulers should hear them only sharpening the curiosity of the hearers. Men from Decapolis, and from the region north of Galilee, also described what they had seen ; and the inhabitants of Jerusalem itself could tell of the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, made more famous by the consequences which immediately ensued.

It was known that there had been a breach between Christ and their rulers and that issue had been fully made ; they seeking his life, and even uniting with the hostile element in the Herodians to effect their purpose ; and he denouncing them as hypocrites, " transgressors of the Word of God by their traditions," and " blind leaders of the blind."* It seemed as if it might be extremely perilous for him to appear at the festival. Still, everywhere the question was put—

" Where is he ?"

Suddenly, in the middle of the feast, it was reported that he was in the city, and even in the temple, teaching there. Such public places, and especially covered porticos, as in the case of the *stoae* in Greece and Rome, were the favorite resort of teachers in those days ; and the Messiah appears to have immediately proceeded to the cloisters of the temple, choosing, probably, the great southern one, with its quadruple rows of pillars, called " Solomon's Porch."

The Jewish rulers were astonished. Pharisees and Scribes from Galilee had brought them accounts of his teachings in that region, and of the effects produced on the people there ;—how they admired and

* Matt. xv, 8, 14.

followed him, and approved his doctrines ; and here he was now in their very temple-courts, apparently about to produce there similar effects. It was a bold act,—this invasion of their precincts, and placing himself publicly in their presence, and before all the people, as a teacher. And how attentively the multitudes were listening to him ! The rulers looked out from the Sanhedrim room, and observed among the thickly-packed masses the conspicuous form of the Teacher, his earnest impressiveness of manner, his wonderful characteristic of that Presence which seemed to belong to him—a power and grandeur, and yet a winningness in address ; a glow in the face, that seemed to come partly from his earnest words and the nature of his teachings, and partly from his inner being ;—they saw, and were filled with both wonder and alarm. It was evident that their combinations against his life had not frightened him into silence ; and here now he was producing effects on those vast multitudes which might render any further efforts against him dangerous to themselves.

What authority had he to teach ? was a question which it seemed to be too late now to put, although this appears to have been his first teaching in Jerusalem ; for the fixed attention of the multitudes, and their lighted-up and earnest faces, seemed to be fully endorsing his teachings, although the proceedings now were altogether out of regular order. For every one was not allowed to appear as a public teacher ;* and although the form of authorization may not have been fully established then, as the Talmuds inform us, was afterwards the case, when, to be

* Matt. xxi, 23.

qualified, an individual must have been for some years as *collega* of a Rabbi, and then promoted to this work of instruction to others ; yet, under Sham-mai and Hillel, in Herod the Great's time, the schools had already in all respects taken this shape.* "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"† was a question, also, circulating around, with marveling at the clear, sound doctrines which he taught. Letters, with them, or literature, consisted in a knowledge of their Scriptures and the oral traditions ; and Christ, they knew, had never been the pupil of any Rabbi, nor drawn any knowledge from their schools. He answered these questions by giving a far higher authority. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me ;" and proceeded immediately to the declaration of a truth containing the deepest philosophy of our nature, and yet clear to the comprehension of every one of his immense audience. The declaration was, "If any man WILL DO the will of my Father, *he shall know* of the doctrine :"—a sound philosophy, yet very little regarded by men. For our emotional nature governs us more than does our intellect. What, from the influence of our feelings, we wish to believe, we generally end with believing. Our reason is a single element : the emotions are multifarious, often unsuspected by us, and, when wrong, making readily-admitted apologies : they crowd around the reason, and overshadow and blind it. Therefore, when we wish to seek truth, our first effort should be to look at our hearts, and to be certain that we desire it : and most of all ought we to be certain that we are willing to take with it, also,

* Tholuck *in loco*.

† John vii, 15.

its consequences, making it *practical* as fast as it is gained. Then shall we know truth. "If any man *will do* the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine."

The Divine Teacher then referred to the annulling of Moses' law, notwithstanding their hypocritical professions of respect for it : for, basing their acts on such professions, they formerly (after the cure at Bethesda) "sought to slay him."—

"Why do ye go about to kill me?"—The people living in Jerusalem were aware of that purpose of their rulers : but it was a new idea to others : and the audience in the temple cried out in astonishment, "Thou art mad : who goeth about to kill thee?"—He reasoned with them then about his former healing, and about the vindictiveness on that occasion, adding, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment. It had now become a scene of excitement among those people, so given to strong, outward demonstrations, and to quick emotions. Some of the people of Jerusalem said : "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know that this is the very Christ?"—which remark was met immediately by objections, "We know this man whence he is : but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

. Their objection is another example of the difficulty which truth had to encounter in Judea ; for a belief was current that there was to be a two-fold manifestation of the Messiah ;—the first at Bethlehem, after which he would straightway disappear and be hid ; and that at length he would show himself ; but from

what place, and at what time that would be, no one knew. In his first appearance at Bethlehem he should do nothing remarkable: in his second, was the hope and expectation of the nation.*

The Messiah met this objection by referring to his divine origin; and now his enemies—all the while watching an opportunity—made an effort to seize on him. But in this they did not succeed, “because his hour had not yet come.” There was, however, after a while, a more formal and official effort to put a stop to these proceedings, and to seize upon his person. The Pharisees were informed that the people in numbers were believing on him, and saying among themselves, “When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man doeth?” which was a logic so clear to the understanding of the multitudes, and so conclusive, that it soon became alarming in its results. The reports from the Galileans here at the feast, had spread widely through the multitudes,—mostly country people like themselves, who did not stop to argue much, but came by a quick way to conclusions; and the effect was becoming epidemic. In a little while the public sentiment in Christ’s favor might break through all restraints of fear for the leaders, which had kept the people in check.

This danger must be met at once: and for this purpose the power of the Sanhedrim was invoked.† The chief priests were also called upon for help; for here, even in the temple, and near the altars and amid the festival celebrations, had this exhibition of the popular feeling in his favor been made.

* Lightfoot; *in loco*.

† This is clearly the inference from John vii, 45-52.

“There were several ranks of priests ; all connected with the temple. 1st. The *plebeian priests*, namely, such as were not of the common people, but wanted school education, and were not reckoned among the learned nor such as were devoted to religion. For, seeing that the whole seed of Aaron was sacerdotal, and priests were not so much made as born, no wonder if some ignorant and poor were among them. Hence is that caution given, ‘that an oblation be not given to a plebeian priest,’ and the reason is added, ‘Because whosoever giveth oblation to a plebeian priest doth all one as if he should give it to a lion, of which it may be doubted whether he will tread it under feet, or eat it or not. [These men performed offices at the altar, being instructed for such duty at the time.]—2nd. There were others who were called *Idiot and private priests*, who, although they were both learned and performed the public offices at the altar, yet were called *private*, because they were priests of a lower and not written order.—3d. The *written degree of priests* was four-fold, besides the degree of the high priest : 1, Heads of ephemeries or courses, which were twenty-four in number : 2, Heads of families in every course : 3, Presidents of various offices in the temple : 4, any priests or Levites indeed, (although not in these orders,) that were chosen into the chief Sanhedrim. Chief priests, therefore, here and elsewhere, where the discourse is of the Sanhedrim, were they, who, being of the priestly or Levitical stock, were chosen into that chief Senate.”*

They sent officers probably of the Sanhedrim or temple to watch for a proper opportunity to seize upon

* Lightfoot.

him : and, from that time, he was closely followed and observed ; his words were weighed by these men ; keen eyes were constantly upon him, scrutinizing his acitons ; and official authority was waiting, till there should be some occasion when the seizure might be made without raising a tumult among the people. Matters seemed to be coming to a crisis. All this time an under-current of admiration and of hearty affection among the multitudes was growing stronger every hour. He said unto the people, " Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and where I am thither ye cannot come." These words perplexed both enemies and friends.

The feast lasted, strictly speaking, only seven days ;* yet, in the law, there is also mention made of eight days ;† and the eighth became gradually to be considered the greatest of all. In Josephus, (Ant. iii, 10, §4,) the eighth day, together with the first, is designated as the time of especial rest. The singing and dancing, the night previous to this day, had been intermitted, as that was the beginning of this, a holy day, the Jewish day always commencing at sunset. The booths were on this day taken down ; the lulabb was laid aside ; and the pome-citron was eaten, which could not be done on any other day.‡ The libation of water with wine had now a more important meaning than on any other day ; for on the eighth day, according to the Talmud, " Judgment is made of the waters, and God determined what rains shall be for the following year." The Talmud says, also, " Why

* Lev. xxiii, 34 : Deut. xvi, 13.

† Lev. xxiii, 36 : Numbers xxix, 35 : see also Nehemiah viii, 18.

doth the law command, saying, 'offer ye water on the feast of the Tabernacles?' The Holy, blessed God saith, 'offer ye waters before me on your feast of Tabernacles that the rains of the year may be blessed to you.' "In the feast of Tabernacles it was determined concerning the waters." "Why do they call it the house of drawing? Because thence they draw the Holy Spirit."*

Rains in Palestine are far more uncertain than with us : and, therefore, on this last, great day of the feast, their religious exercises took an intensely interesting form. With the deepest earnestness they raised their voices in the Hallel : with the most hearty devotion they joined in the exercises of the sacrificial offerings, and particularly the one peculiar to this feast, the water-libation.

This eighth day of the feast arrived. On the morrow the crowds were to disperse, and to return to their distant homes. It had been such a festival as they had never witnessed before : one of strong excitements, of discussions among themselves respecting this Wonderful Being possessing such miraculous powers, and so interesting in his teachings. They had seen him with their own eyes, and had heard him :—that face so grand with the Divinity glowing in all its lineaments, and yet so winning—and that voice so gentle in its modulations, all, however, so strangely mingled with authority. They did not wish to go away only half-satisfied : and now, on this last day, they watched for him ; and, when he came, listened for his words with peculiar attention, and a greatly increased interest. Their feelings yearned towards

him ; for he had spoken to their hearts, and his words had reached those eternal longings which the soul has for an inner life and peace and satisfaction, for which it calls with an earnest, unceasing cry.

The first words from him, this eighth morning, startled all who heard him ;—they were such an answer to all those longings. “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters.”* That very water of Siloam, carried now by in a tankard, and received to the temple with loud sounds of the trumpets and cymbals, and with peculiar rejoicings, and when poured on with the wine in libations, accompanied by the loud Hallelu of the immense multitudes, was believed by them to be significant of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit,—indicative of some mighty, direct, supernatural influences : and here, now, that Wonderful Being, wonderful beyond all that they had ever seen or heard of, called to them—

“ If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink :”—and said, moreover, that those who thus came to him, should be the means of allaying the eternal thirst of others. Did not their souls thirst, with a ceaseless cry to have the feeling assuaged Every man there knew and felt this to be the case.

Many said, when they heard him :

“ Of a truth this is the prophet :” others, their hearts fully responding to his words :

“ *This is the Christ.*” Some replied :

“ Shall Christ come out of Galilee ;” and they quoted the Scriptures which said that he ought to

come from Bethlehem. Thus a disputing arose among the crowd, and there was an agitation in those temple precincts ; the sacrifices of the Tabernacle feast still continuing. Some would have seized him : but the Roman garrison in Jerusalem was, on these occasions, particularly watchful to repress tumults. There was, consequently, no violence to him at this time.

Among these crowds, all the while lurking and watching, were the officers sent by the Sanhedrim to seize upon any safe opportunity to arrest him : and they now came, and presented themselves before their superiors in session in the council chamber.

"Why have ye not brought him?" was the angry demand. They answered,

"Never man spake like this man."

With eyes flashing scorn and anger, the Pharisees spake out,

"Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?—But this people who know not the law are cursed?"

One voice in the Sanhedrim was raised for the purpose of checking such proceedings ; rather, however, in expostulation with the rulers than in defence of Christ. It was that of Nicodemus, not yet bold, as he afterwards became, but still not willing, by silence, to seemingly endorse their action.

"Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" he asked ; and the remark brought a storm of wrath upon him.

"Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Their hatred led them to malign even their own

best prophets, and to falsify history ; for Elijah was from Galiicee, as was also Jonah, and, perhaps, Nahum and Hosca.*

This council seems to have broken up in a tumult of passion : "And every man went unto his own house."†

Another scene of dancing and like festivities, during that evening, formed the closing event of the Feast of Tabernacles.

CHAPTER XXV.

BETHANY AND ROAD TO JERICHO.—A PARABLE.

AWAY from the turbulence of the city. It is pleasant, after the scenes just recorded, to find ourselves in the quiet country ; the Messiah there, in the enjoyment of a few hours of peace, in a family whose generous feelings harmonized with his own. It must have been to him a great relief and refreshment.

Opposite to Jerusalem, on the east, and directly across the brook Kedron, is the Mount of Olives, a range, three or four miles in length, and running north and south. On crossing this mountain, we find, at the present day, nestled in a recess among the projecting slopes on its eastern side, the village of Bethany, immediately on the site of the Bethany of our Saviour's time. It is almost two miles from Jerusalem, by the usual road. A fountain gushes from the rocks at the edge of the village, which is embo-

* See Alford *in loco*.

† John vii, 11-53.

somed among trees, in the branches of which the nightingales, numerous in that land,* love to sit, and to sing their nightly songs. It is a quiet place, which the noises of the city do not reach ; and the Messiah, finding there a kind hospitality and a genial home, in the family of Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, retired to this spot soon after the scenes of the Tabernacle festival. The night of the eighth day he spent at this place: in the morning he returned to the city for further teaching,† and then he again sought the retirement and quiet of this friendly house. But the cunning of enemies followed him even here. A lawyer somewhere in this neighborhood came trying him with questions,—

“ Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ?”—the most important question that a human being can ever ask ; but put here with no good intent, only to find subjects for accusation or complaint.

After all these scenes in the temple, it will be a relief to sit down here, and listen for a while to the parable narrated by our Saviour in answer to this lawyer ; but some topographical facts respecting the region where the scene of the parable was laid must first receive our notice.

Bethany lies just on the western edge of the great desert or “ Wilderness of Judea,” which extends eastwardly from this until it reaches the steep descent to the plain of Jericho. This latter city was one of those appropriated to the Priests and Levites ; and at the time of which we are speaking, 12,000 of them were residents in that place. It will be remembered by the reader that the “ Wilderness ” was

* “ Robinson’s Researches.”

† John viii, 2-59.

about 60 miles long by 15 in breadth. An American traveller thus describes this, its most northern part: "The road beyond Bethany [eastward] continues to descend, though a number of ridges extend across from the north, terminating at a valley on our right, into which our road pretty soon declined. We followed this valley for three hours or more in a direction nearly south-east. The whole region is formed of limestone rock, commonly broken and precipitous, and shooting out spurs into and athwart the straitened way, so as to make our progress slow and laborious. We were perpetually clambering over rocks and going down broken, precipitous declivities, which though really productive of no other evil than delay and fatigue, often threatened more serious dangers. A little grass [April 20] and a few stunted trees appeared in the valley and on the hill-sides, upon the first part of the route, just enough to relieve this dreary region of the aspect of the absolute sterility which characterizes the deserts of Arabia. [He then arrives at a fountain and the remains of a Khan, midway between Jerusalem and Jericho. The valley beyond the Khan is sparingly supplied with verdure; the mountains on either side are bare, and 'exceedingly dreary.'] At the end of perhaps an hour and a half from the Khan, we left the valley to the right hand and entered upon a region far more rugged than that through which we had previously passed. The verdure gradually diminished, till at length not a shrub or blade of grass was visible. Still there was less bare rock than before, nor was it of so dark a hue. The surface of the stone was more loose and shelving, and in many places reduced to debris. The

road runs along the edge of steep precipices and yawning gulfs, and in a few places is overhung with the crags of the mountain. The aspect of the whole region is peculiarly savage and dreary, vieing in these respects, though not in overpowering grandeur, with the wilds of Sinai. The mountains seem to be loosened from their foundations and rent to pieces by some terrible convulsion, and then left to be scathed by the rays of the sun, which scorches this naked land with consuming heat."* The place is still infested with robbers, as of old.

The lawyer on this occasion had asked the Messiah, "Who is my neighbor?" and Jesus answering, said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.' Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He

* Dr. Olin. See also Josephus. Bel. iv, 8, § 2.

that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."*

The lawyer, completely thwarted in his purpose, and made to condemn himself, must have winced under the application. He, an official expounder of the oral law, directed, in a manner which he could not refute, to take a Samaritan as an example, when this oral law said, "If one sees one of the Gentiles fall into the sea, he shall not fetch him up; for it is said, Thou shalt not stand up against the blow of thy neighbor. But such an one is not thy neighbor."†

The Messiah himself remembered the ten lepers recently cured in Samaria, of whom only one returned to show his gratitude, and that one a Samaritan.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

It is always an interesting spectacle when bold, simple, plain truth comes into antagonism with the cunning chicanery of men. Truth is almost sure to gain the victory, even to human apprehension; and its opposite writhes all the more under defeat, because the means causing this have been so simple.

A case of such a nature, in Jerusalem, comes before us now, in this history; the opponents being, on one side, a street beggar; on the other, the Jewish San-

* Luke x, 25-27.

† Lightfoot.

hedrim ; the former single and alone, even his parents being afraid to sustain him, though conscious that he was right : the latter armed with power, and using, as an instrument of terror, a new decree,—that “if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.” There were three degrees of excommunication among the Jews : the first, or slightest, of which was separation from the synagogue, and a suspension of intercourse with all Jews whatsoever. It lasted thirty days ; and, if the individual did not repent, the time might be doubled or tripled. The second kind of putting out of the synagogue was called the *curse*. It was pronounced with imprecations in the presence of ten men ; and it so thoroughly excluded the individual from all communion whatever with his countrymen, that they were not allowed to sell him even the necessities of life. The third degree was solemn and absolute exclusion from all intercourse and communion with any other individuals of the nation ; and the criminal was left in the hands of God.*

The Messiah had returned from Bethany to Jerusalem ; and was passing along one of its thoroughfares with his disciples, when they came upon an object that might well excite commiseration,—a man blind from his birth. In the disciples, however, the case gave rise to a psychological query, and they turned to the Messiah with a question which appears singular to us, but which arose out of notions more or less current at that time : “Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind ?” The belief in metempsychosis, or previous existence of souls,

* Jahn's Archæology.

was universal among the Pharisees ; but as, in their opinion, the souls only of good men could be removed into other bodies, while those of bad men were subject to eternal punishment,* such a belief could not have given rise to this question. Light-foot says : " It appears from this dispute that the ancient opinion of the Jews was, that the infant, from its first quickening, had some stain upon it. And the great doctor, Judah, [compiler of the Mishna] was originally of that opinion himself." The sweeping remark of the Pharisees, in verse 24 of this chapter,† intimates that both the man and his parents were originally guilty of sins with which they themselves could not be charged.

The Messiah replied to the disciples, that the cause of his being so born, was in God's own purposes for good, always wider than any individuality ; to which he added some other remarks ; and then he spat on the ground, and made clay with the spittle ; and, having anointed the eyes of the blind man, he bade him go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which was at the outlet of the Tyropeon valley, and probably not far from where this incident occurred.

What did the man himself think of this ? The blind are quick-witted, and also sharp in hearing ; and his obeying so promptly the direction shows that he fully understood who was addressing him and what were his powers ; and the poor man must have been trembling with the excess of hopes. He stopped not, however, for inquiry or further remarks, but, stumbling in his haste, earnest, almost wild with

* Jos. Bel. ii, 8, § 14 ; Antiq. xviii, 1, § 3.

† John ix.

expectation, he hurried on, reached the fountain, washed, *SAW*.

Could he believe it himself? And yet there, before him, were objects all revealed; houses, earth, trees, sky, men; a world open, all at once, upon him, full of its strange, moving scenes and its beautiful sights. How often had he wondered how things looked! now he saw. How often had he tried to imagine what color was! there were colors everywhere now, though he knew not their names. There was the water gurgling at the fountain, with its old familiar sound; he *saw* it now: yonder was a mountain,—Olivet, was it? Yonder,—yes, that he knew must be the temple: yonder, the bridge, high in the air, spanning the valley of the Tyropeon. That hill and city at the further end of the bridge he knew must be Zion. Great, glorious, grand, all was to him; beautiful, wonderful! But where was Jesus, he who had given all this blessedness to him? The man turned back into the Tyropeon valley again, and went up towards the city, stumbling now even worse than before. Distant objects seemed to be close by, and he put out his hand to touch them; for his eyes had not yet learned to measure distances. He raised his foot at inequalities yards off, and brought it down, almost falling as he did so, on level space. He was more uncertain and puzzled in his movements than he had ever previously been; and he went on, hesitating and almost falling on the even road; yet amused at his mis-steps, and delighted at everything he saw.

But his ears, so sharp always, were listening with painful earnestness for that voice which he was sure

he would recognize ; he wanted to see *him*. Other voices he soon heard ; and they were in loud dispute :

“ Is not this he that sat and begged ? ” some asked.

“ It is he, ” some remarked.

“ He is like him, ” said others. The man said,

“ I am he. ”

“ How were thine eyes opened ? ”

“ A man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash ; and I went and washed, and I received sight. ”

“ Where is he ? ”

“ I know not ? ”

He would have been rejoiced to know ; but he had, at present, no further opportunities for searching ; for the Jewish rulers had their watchful agents about the city ; and before the man could do further mischief to their cause, by satisfying the curiosity of the people, he was seized and led before the Sanhedrim itself.

It was the Sabbath day, when all this occurred.

The Sanhedrim were excited by what they saw and heard. The man was before them with eye-sight as good as theirs ; everybody said he had been born blind. If so, it was a miracle of the clearest and most decided character, and could not be contradicted. What should they do ? He had been a street beggar, and every person knew him, and knew what the extent of his affliction had been. He could not be silenced, or the world silenced ; for the fame of this event was already spreading everywhere about : they could, however, perhaps confound him by ques-

tions, and make him contradict himself ; or, through fear, swerve off from any acknowledgment of the healer. They would try.

They asked him how he had received his sight : and he answered, as he had before done to the people in the streets.

"This man," they said, "is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day : " for, some of the Rabbins expressly forbade applying saliva at all to the eyelids on the Sabbath : others allowed it in case of inflammation of the eyes.*

"How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles," said other members of their council.

—Their own Sanhedrim was becoming divided.—
They tried him again :

"What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes ?"

"He is a prophet," replied the bold man, bluntly and decidedly.

But there might be hopes from his parents : they might be induced, through fear of excommunication, to give the subject another character, perhaps to prevaricate, or at least be led to contradict their son. They were sent for, and made their appearance before the council. The latter asked :

"Is this your son, who was born blind ? how, then, doth he now see ?"

"We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind : but by what means he now seeth, we know not : or who hath opened his eyes we know not : he is of age ; ask him : he shall speak for himself."

The poor man looked at them. They were his pa-

* Lightfoot, *in loco*.

rents : and, O how often, in childhood and manhood, he had desired, with most intense longing, to see their faces, to know what were their features, how they looked. He saw them now, his own father and mother, standing there ; and the longings of those many years were being satisfied. He was not able, yet, to read emotion in features ; but his quick ear knew, long ago, all the intonations of their voices : and he knew, at this time, only too well, what these in their reply meant ; and that they were basely abandoning their son, in the very hour and joy of his recovery, to the Sanhedrim, through fear ; leaving him to run the risk, alone, among those cunning men.

The rulers addressed him again. He was bolder now, even than before ; bold in his indignation at the meanness of these rulers, who he saw were hoping to browbeat his parents into a contradiction of their son's words, and a denial of the greatness of his blessing ; and bold, also, through determination to adhere to his true Friend of that morning, who had given him the blessing.

" Give God the praise," they said, " we know that this man is a sinner."

" Whether he be a sinner or no," he answered, " I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

" What did he to thee ? how opened he thine eyes ?"—They hoped for some stumbling or contradiction in his words. The brave, quick-witted man seems now to have been in a quiet, secret enjoyment of their dilemma. Indignant that this insolent and crafty tribunal should tempt him to a falsehood, and to deny his benefactor, and to assist in the downfall—and per-

haps violent death of one who had raised him to a joyous life, his contempt broke through all bounds, and threw a cutting sarcasm into his answer.

"I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ? will ye also be his disciples ?"—

"A stormy scene ensued. They saw now that he knew of Christ as one making many disciples :—how could he, the shrewd beggar, help knowing it, when the passers by at his thoroughfare had, for days, been full of talk about the Messiah ?—They saw that he had been playing with their ill-disguised hate and revengeful purposes towards Christ ; and, losing their dignity, they broke upon him with revilings :

"Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses : as for this fellow we know not from whence he is." He answered, as before, in assumed simplicity, but severe sarcasm :

"Why, herein is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners ; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God he could do nothing." Their reply to his logic was only a fierce invective loaded with Pharisaic assumption and scorn.

"Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ?" And so they drove him out of the Sanhedrim's presence.

There is a very beautiful appendage to all this ; and it is in the gentleness and childlike simplicity of the brave

man, when, not long afterwards, he met the Messiah himself. His observations on the human face had not given very satisfactory results; for they had shown him angry and malignant passions at work; the cowed, timid looks of his parents; the workings of disputatious curiosity; the angry scenes of the Sanhedrim; the violence of gesture and manner, when they drove him out. He knew that the benevolent being, who had given him the great blessing, was not to be sought among these; but where and when should he see him, and hear those well remembered tones of kindness again?—He heard them suddenly. The Messiah had knowledge of this violence in the council chamber, and had perhaps come to look for him; and the man's eyes were, at last, fixed on the features so different from those in the Sanhedrim; and he heard the same tones that had thrilled him before. He was asked:

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

“Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?”

“Thou hast seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”

—“Lord I believe.”—And he worshipped him.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

It will be remembered that under Antiochus Epiphanes “the Illustrious,” or “the Madman,” (B. C.

* John ix, 1-38.

167,) the second temple at Jerusalem, built by Zerubabel, was defiled ; the exercise of the Jewish rites of religion was forbidden ; a statue of the Olympic Jupiter was placed on the great altar, and sacrifices to that god were there offered by the Grecian priests. When the nationality was restored by the Maccabees, and the city was in part recovered (B. C. 165) by the brave Judas, of that race, he found shrubs and weeds growing in the courts of the temple, and a scene of complete desolation over the desecrated grounds of Moriah. With loud lamentations, and with the sounds of martial music, the Jewish people went up to the temple ; and, while a portion of them, with arms in their hands, kept watch on the Syrian garrison still holding the adjoining citadel, others purified the grounds, constructed a new altar, provided vessels for the temple services, and instituted, on the 25th of December,* the Feast of Dedication, to be continued seven days, which was ever afterwards held sacred in the Jewish calendar. The other three great feasts could be celebrated only at Jerusalem, but this might be observed at their homes. It was a time of great rejoicing ; and as lights were kept burning in every house throughout the night, this festival had also the name of Phota, or Lights.

The anniversary of this feast occurred not long after the events named in the last chapter ; and, one day, during its continuance, as the Messiah was walking in the great cloister of the temple—Solomon's Porch—he was surrounded by men, designated by John as leaders, evidently now with no friendly intent. They addressed him :

◦ Alford.

"How long dost thou worry our minds :* tell us plainly if thou be the Christ?"

The elements were wintry around that lofty portico, but no sky could be more dark and lowering than were the purposes of those men ; for the city was deeply affected by the miracles of Christ ; and the Pharisees were, every day, finding themselves more powerless among the people, while their thirst for vengeance was daily increasing. Every effort had shown how futile their anger was becoming ; and, worse than that, how easily they might be foiled by the very singleness and simplicity of the means used for their defeat. They had tried repeatedly to entrap the Messiah, either by efforts to lead him into the intricacies of their law, or by questions intended to involve him with the government, or by placing him in situations where, whatever might be his action, troubles, they hoped, would ensue. One of these last was a recent case, where an adulteress was brought before him ; and where, if he decided that they should let her go, he might be justly charged with immorality ; or, if he were to say that the law of Moses ought to be put in force, they might proceed to do it, and a tumult be raised that would bring upon him the vengeance of the Roman power. So, also, in the trial of the blind man, the beggar's simple manner had baffled them, and given the unprotected but brave individual a quiet triumph, while they had separated in a tumult of rage.

"How long dost thou trouble our souls?" as, with faces indeed marked with trouble, they encircled him in that portico, ready for any violence that opportu-

* Τὴν ψυχὴν ὑμῶν αἵρετο.

nity might suggest, yet feeling the strong necessity for caution ; for the castle of Antonia, at the north-west corner of the temple, looked directly into this portico, and Roman soldiers were, in all the festival-times, especially on the watch.*

The Messiah said, in answer to their question :

“ I told you, and ye believed not : the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me : ” and we can imagine him looking calmly and placidly upon them, as they scowled and winced at this simple and powerful logic. For the multitudes around, listening to this dialogue, would all remember the miracle of the man born blind and restored to sight. He added :

“ But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Then, finally, he gave the climax to their rage, by declaring :

“ I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE.”

There were stones lying there for the finishing of the temple : they seized them and threatened to stone him.

“ Many good works have I showed you from my Father ; for which of these works do ye stone me ? ” he said.

“ For a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

He made no disclaimer to this charge in his reply, but they listened, forbearing violence, till he added :

“If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works ; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.”

--Again their wrath became furious ; and there was a rush in order to commit violence ; but he passed safely from among them :—“his time had not come.”*

He crossed over the Jordan into Perca ; and it is a relief, as we read his history, to find him once more away from that city of turbulence and violence and of corrupt men false in doctrine, and hypocritical in life.

He was now breathing the pure, country air ; among a people of more simple habits, and more open to the truth. It will be remembered that he had some time before this, while yet at Capernaum, sent out seventy of his disciples, with directions to go “to every city and place, whither he himself would come.” They had recently returned to him at Jerusalem, making report of their mission with joy ;† and in his thanksgiving on that occasion we have words referring to his selection of such men :

“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”‡

Indeed, the scenes which we have just been witnessing in Jerusalem show clearly the wisdom in the Messiah’s choice which excluded such men as the schools produced.

* John x, 22-39.

† Luke x, 1.

‡ Ibid verse 21.

The people resorted to him in Perea, and believed on him there. They said, "John did no miracle : but all things that John spake of this man were true."*

CHAPTER XXVIII:

RAISING OF LAZARUS.

"I AM the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

What a power in words !

Those words of Christ have been like symphonies over the world, ever since they were uttered ; reaching the dull ear of the dying ; floating about the solitary home of the mourner grieving for friends laid in the grave ; meeting us, inscribed on the church-yard gate, as if heaven itself had been writing on its portals ; and, through all life, giving us the courage to meet, calmly, the fearfulness of its end.

"I am the resurrection and the life : * * * whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The history connected with those words is a very remarkable one.

The Messiah, as just narrated, had gone to Perea to deepen the instructions given there by the seventy, and for other labors in that large, and, in some portions of

it, populous region. He was yet, however, somewhere in the neighborhood of the Jordan, when a message from the family at Bethany reached him, with a touching, though a very modest appeal :

“Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.”

The message did not ask him to come back : but the simple fact of its being sent had evidently in it some kind of expectancy, either that he would come, or that he would send a healing communication, or at once speak relief. He, who could open the eyes of the blind, and had cured so many in Galilee by a word,—among them the distant son of the nobleman at Capernaum,—could heal now his sick friend by a similar mandate, even if he should not come to him : he, who was so ready to relieve strangers, and had stopped before the beggar at the wayside, to speak words of pity and help, would not surely fail now, in the instance of those to whom he was so much attached. The message came from the sisters of Lazarus, stating the case in simple but affecting language :

“Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.”

But he sent no healing word back again ; nor did he appear disposed himself to go : for he continued still two days in the same place. Such seeming abandonment, in their distress, of those who had showed him hospitality so often, might very well excite wonder in the minds of the disciples. This family were among the few of his open and avowed friends, defying the edict of the Sanhedrim : but he seemed now to forsake them in their hour of pressing need. His remark, when the message from Bethany reached him, might appear to them to have even a tinge of selfishness in it : “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory

of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." They watched him anxiously ; for no one could know that family at Bethany, as they did, without loving them : but still no message thither : no word of relief.—Finally, he said :

" Our friend Lazarus is dead."

The disciples were shocked and distressed. Just so had he treated John. Was this treatment of nearest friends a sample of what they themselves might expect ? They had rejoiced in his supernatural powers, and had felt, that, whatever afflictions might come upon them, they had a friend in their Leader, who was equal to every extremity, and might be relied on for help. But was this case, and was John's, an example of his relief ? He had told them that they should be persecuted for his sake ; and had drawn many a dark picture of the sufferings they were to endure ; and had called upon them to brace themselves up for endurance : what then ?—To be deserted in the end ? They had always comprehended his meaning imperfectly. His words had a mystical sense to them, containing promises of final victory and rewards ; but all these promises had come to them darkly and were but half understood. His *present* kindness, goodness, and power had been their trust ; but there was a manifestation that startled them, a desertion of a beloved friend and a kind family : Lazarus was dead !

In the meanwhile, those sisters at Bethany had watched by the bedside of the dying man ; mingling with their afflictions, as they saw life ebbing away, many a discomfoting thought of him who might so easily have helped, and did not help. They had to

keep this grief to themselves ; for they could not, before their visitors and sympathizers at the bedside, speak words that might seem to be disparaging to Christ, or containing reproach : and these thoughts were all the more corroding and heavy because they had to be kept hid within their hearts. They had listened, with painful nervousness, for quick footsteps bringing news of his coming : none came. Hope rose at every unusual sound out of the room, and died away, and rose again ; and still kept flickering on, as the life, too, was flickering there, on that bed of pain.

All in vain :—in vain !

The blow came at last. They had been cherishing a double hope, both of Christ's quick presence, and his word of healing : all was lost. They had now the double grief, the crushing weight from their brother's death, and from that apparent neglect by one whom their brother and they had so much loved and trusted, and by whom he might have been, but was not, saved.

They buried the corpse in the usual manner ; their friends from the village and from Jerusalem condoling with them, and giving the usual loud tokens of grief. These friends sometimes—and the sister could not help overhearing them, if, indeed, the words were not spoken for their hearing—sometimes wondered why Jesus had not come or sent help ; sometimes with words of doubt about him, sometimes mixing censures for his neglect ; but the sisters had to keep their own thoughts and feelings crushed down within themselves,—a very heavy weight on their already overburdened hearts.

When he had announced the death of Lazarus to the disciples, he had added : " And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe : nevertheless let us go unto him."

Thomas, referring, doubtless, to the late attempt at Jerusalem to stone him, and to his own predictions about his approaching death, said to the other disciples, " Let us also go that we may die with him." And they proceeded towards Bethany, by slow stages, however ; for they were four days getting to that town, although the distance was not very great.

Their journey was in the winter time, and lay across that desolate region of the Wilderness of Judea, always gloomy, but doubly so at this season of the year. And as the apostles followed the Messiah over the bleak, cold waste, they had time for many reflections ; and their reflections might well be of a sombre kind, corresponding to the scenes around. They had left home, occupations, domestic comforts, in order to follow this new Master, proclaimed by John to be the Son of God. Bright visions of earthly glory and power had been flickering before them, but not one of these had ever yet been realized. On the contrary, they had been scoffed at by the rulers at Jerusalem, and their Master himself was near being stoned in the very temple by the agents of the Sanhedrim. He had miraculous powers, undoubtedly ; but he never exercised them for any aggrandizement, such as had been their chief expectations in leaving all to follow him. He had just been telling them what they might expect in future. Honors ? power ? glory ? rank ? No ; but stripes, persecutions, hatred, and death by violence. He had promised them comfort

from on high, and had given assurance of his help ; but here was Lazarus, the beloved friend, neglected in his need and now dead. What, as respected themselves, in the dreary prospect of the future—more dreary far than this utter desolation of nature around them ; the crumbling, chalky cliffs ; the shelterless wastes ; the sharp, biting winds ; the wintry skies, frowning down on the wide, bleak scene below ?

They drew their garments around them, their hearts more gloomy than the skies or the wastes of the wilderness ; and so they travelled over those long miles, till at last they came in sight of Bethany ; no cheerful greeting, however, awaiting them now, as in the former times.

The Messiah did not enter the town at once, but remained on its outskirts : intelligence, however, was immediately carried to Martha, one of the sisters, that he had come. She hurried out ; and that deep, additional grief, as of a felt neglect, broke out before him :

“ Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” She added, “ but I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” He said :

“ Thy brother shall rise again ;”—and she replied :

“ I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

“ *I am the resurrection and the life* : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever believeth and liveth in me shall never die. Believest thou this ?”

“ Yea, Lord : I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of God, which should come into the world.”

Leaving him there, she hurried back to her sister Mary, with the news :

"The Master is come and calleth for thee."

The lamentations on such occasions lasted eight days ; and there were many mourners and sympathizers in the house, who, seeing Mary rise hastily and go out, followed her, saying :

"She goeth unto the grave to weep there."

Hurrying on, the whole company of visitors came immediately in front of the Messiah, and found Mary at his feet, where she also had let out her bitter grief, in the same cry as that of Martha.

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

The company around joined their weeping with hers. The Messiah was convulsed with strong emotions in his deep sympathies with human griefs : for this scene was but a sample of what is ever occurring in our world. He asked :

"Where have ye laid him ?"

"Lord, come and sec."

Jesus wept.

"Behold," said the company, "how he loved him." Some of them asked :

"Could not this man which hath opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died ?"

Again that convulsion of grief, as they were advancing towards the tomb. There could be no longer a doubt, in the mind of any one, of his affection for Lazarus, and of the deep sympathies for the distress before him : and the feelings of the sisters,—if any doubts had crept into them,—were fully satis-

fied. In silence, they reached presently the place where the body had been interred,—a cave, with a stone in front closing the entrance. The mourners were thinking of the gloom and desolation within, the horror of that abandonment by the world to corruption and the worm,—when the silence was broken by Christ's ordering the stone to be taken away. Martha interposed a remonstrance, that by this time the body must be offensive; for it had now been there four days: but he replied:

“Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?”

—The scene changed immediately; for now every one supposed that there was some strange demonstration at hand. The solemnity of mourning and the wailing cries ceased: crowds pressed forward: a low murmur of voices went among them:—“What was meant?—Corruption had advanced in the body: death's work had been fully sealed by decay: all power now seemed to be in vain: what would he attempt?” The mourners at Bethany from Jerusalem seem to have been from the higher classes;* and strange feelings were at work in their hearts, some of these not friendly to Christ. But curiosity was uppermost.

By this time the stone had been rolled away. They could see in to where the dim light half revealed the scene, in which death held his fearful rule; the silence and gloom all made more impressive by the deeply earnest life-scene at the mouth of the cave. For solemnity had given place to intense curiosity,

* See John xi, 31, 33, 36 and 45, in connection with John's distinction between “the Jews” and “the people,” in vii, 12, 18.

and a crowd of faces—sometimes showing bad passions, more often hope, was without ; every lineament drawn into the utmost tension of expectancy. The company tried to read in the face of the Messiah his intentions ; or they peered into the entrance of the tomb,—all there so still and death-like. Christ's features still showed the marks of his recent strong emotions ; but his face, though sad in its deep sympathies, had still on it the grandeur of power and command.

The commotion from this expectancy had ceased, and was succeeded by a painful silence among the crowd. They gazed on Christ ; and when his lips now opened, their hearts throbbed as if about to burst in their emotion. But it was not as they expected.—It was in prayer.—

“ Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always : but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Turning, then, to the grave he said, in a loud voice,—

“ Lazarus, come forth !”

There was a sound in the cave, where all had just been in that stillness of death ; a rustling, as of a movement there ; a further noise of motion ; and Lazarus presently stood before the gazing, excited, frightened, shrinking throng ; his body still swathed, as customary with the dead, and a napkin bound over his face. This was removed ; and the features, though shrunken and emaciated by the disease, *were full of life. The sisters had their loved brother again !*

The feelings of the crowd had been worked up to

such a pitch of tension that it seemed as if their nature could scarcely have stood the trial of that scene much longer ; but now they breathed freely again, and their full hearts found vent, some in tones of joy, some in praises and thanksgivings, and in congratulations to the family and to Lazarus himself. Some turned wondering, glad, and believing eyes on the Messiah himself, and received full faith in him into their own hearts, with a reverence and affection that filled them with new and thrilling joys.—Some went straight to the Pharisees to tell them what had been done.

In Jerusalem there was a commotion in consequence. The news of the miracle, the most wonderful that could be performed, was rapidly spreading over the city ; and the members of the Sanhedrim were called together, much puzzled, and now greatly alarmed.

“What shall we do ?” they said ; “for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Pharisees will come and take away both our place and nation.”

But Caiaphas, then high priest, relieved them from their dilemma by declaring authoritatively :

“Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.”

They took him at his word, prophetic, and not fully understood even by himself ; and from that day forth “they took council together for to put Jesus to death.”* They believed that Christ or themselves must perish : and the manner in which his fame was

spreading, and the astounding nature of his miracles gave them now but a little time for choice.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN EPHRAIM AND PEREA.

THE site of Ephraim, the city to which the Messiah retired with his disciples after raising Lazarus and the determination of the Sanhedrim in consequence,* is not fully known at present, but is supposed to have been where el-Taiyibeh is now situated. This is a town twenty miles north-east of Jerusalem, and on such a lofty eminence as to overlook the whole desert of Judea, adjacent to it on the east, and also the valley of the Jordan, with portions of Perea beyond the river. From this he made visits to the neighboring country, and also extensive journeys through Perea; but there is some obscurity attending this part of our Saviour's life. Doubtless it was active; and critics place, during these few months, the healing of the infirm woman in a synagogue, exciting the indignation of the rulers of that place of worship, because it was done on their Sabbath day.† On another occasion he was dining with a Pharisee on the Sabbath when a similar case occurred. The hospitalities of the house were no safeguard against the machinations of his enemies, and "they watched him."‡

* John xi, 54.

† Luke xiii, 10-17.

‡ Luke xiv, 1.

A man afflicted with dropsy was brought there, perhaps in order to produce results on which the Pharisees and lawyers, who were also guests, might bring against him a charge of violating the Sabbath. He knew their thoughts, and said, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" They considered it best to be silent; and taking the man, he healed him, and sent him away; saying to the company, in the same strain with which he had recently silenced the rulers in the synagogue: "Which of you shall have an ass or ox fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?"* The people rejoiced at "the glorious things done by him."

The Messiah observed the jealous eagerness of the guests to have the places of highest honor at the feast; and he gave them now some admonitions on this subject, ending with the declaration, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Then, turning to his host, he added, in a similar strain:

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; and then thou shalt be blessed. For they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

We have next, in these journeyings, a scene altogether characteristic; and, with it, some parables, which have, ever since, been food to the souls of men wherever they have been heard. Men have written

* Matt. xiii, 10-17.

and spoken words to delight the fancy, or to contribute to physical enjoyment, often in such a manner as to win the highest applause : but words *to feed the soul*, even though plain and simple, are in value far beyond all other words. Men feel them to be so ; and, although their lips may sometimes treat them lightly, yet the inward conviction acknowledges them, and the heart bows in full recognition of their worth.

On the occasion thus referred to we are told, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Christ attracted the despised in the world, and the lost. We can almost see those throngs around him, gazing on that face where authority was so softened by gentleness of expression, and where majesty was so tempered with kindness of manner, that none could feel repelled. The Jewish Rabbis stalked with a lordly step among those of inferior degree ; they felt it necessary to sustain their reputed sanctity by a distance of manner, and by the exclusiveness of caste ; and, in John vii, 49, we hear them declare "that this people who knoweth not the law [doubtless meaning the unwritten law] are cursed."

Therefore we may readily imagine with what feelings of attachment, as well as of wonder, the multitudes followed Christ ; gazed upon those features so divine in their expression ; felt attracted by that Presence which seemed not to be of earth, yet never awed any one into a fearfulness in approaching ; and how they listened to his words, so different in their mean-

ing, and in the tone in which they were uttered, from any thing else which they had ever before heard.

Let us pause here, and listen to his words. Let us try, in listening, to picture to our own minds that human form enshrining the Divinity ; that countenance with the grandeur of the divine expression tempered with winningness ; the lineaments moulded by that unutterable love which was never weakness but had always the highest heroism of love ; the eyes in which heaven seemed to look out on earth. Let us listen :—

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it ? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me ; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it ? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me ; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

“And he said, A certain man had two sons ; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he

divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land ; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat ; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet : and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat, and be merry : for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field : and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come ; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received

him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in : therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment : and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends : but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad ; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found."

This period during the Messiah's last retirement from Jerusalem—spent probably chiefly in Perea, in order to deepen the instructions by the seventy—abounds in parables and practical admonitions ; among the former, that of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and also one showing to every man feeling himself to be a lost sinner, how he must approach to God.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray : the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus within himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, or even as this publican. I fast twice in a week, I give tithes of all I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other : for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased : and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

A scene occurred during this visit to Perea, which

painters have often endeavored to exhibit on canvass, but which is far beyond the powers of art to reach. It is easy to portray man in the coarser passions, and grosser exhibitions of his nature : but the more any individual rises into the true heaven-like nobility of soul ; and the grand thoughts and great emotions of such nobility show through the eyes and take expression on the face, the more the act of copying verges upon the impossible. Who, then, can paint the Messiah, in any scene, but especially in that to which we now refer ?

It was that of his receiving the little children brought to him in order that " he might put his hands on them and pray." His disciples rebuked those who brought them ; but he checked his followers :—

" Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

He took them up in his arms, and put his hands on them and blessed them.*

His kindly, genial feeling towards children, and the manner in which he attracted them towards himself, form one of the most pleasing characteristics of his ministry on earth. Often we are lost in wonder, and often we are awed by the incidents of this ministry, but there is a charm to all our finer feelings of admiration and love, as we see the children clustering about his knees ; and see, from all those scenes, how strong must have been the sympathy in them towards him, in him towards them. He speaks of their likeness to

* Matt. xix, 13-15 : Mark x, 13-16.

the kingdom of heaven : he tells us that, unless we become humble like a child ;—have its full, unquestioning love and confidence, but in our case towards God ;—the humble yielding up of ourselves to Him, as children give themselves into their parents' arms,—we cannot see the kingdom of God.

The greatest men are, more frequently than otherwise, noted for a childlike simplicity of manners ; and Coleridge says, "Men of true genius give themselves up to the first simple impressions of common things. They are content to wonder, and smile, and admire, just as they did when they were children ; it is the opening of the heart to all sweet influences."

One of the most beautiful things in the world is a person, mature in years, but still keeping the heart fresh as in early life. Individuals may sometimes be seen, even of advanced age, but with the feelings all genial, and kind, and responsive ;—in their heart life never growing old. But such persons are rare. The writer of this work has had the happiness to number among his intimate friends one of this class, a person (lately deceased) of the highest scientific reputation abroad as well as at home, but more remarkable still for carrying the bloom and freshness of life even beyond his eightieth year. He loved children, and they always loved him.

CHAPTER XXX.

JERICHO.

A STRANGER travelling, in the times of our Saviour, eastwardly from Bethany, along the high-road would, after five or six hours spent in crossing that dreary Wilderness of Judea, be suddenly startled by a view as if some enchantment had operated upon his sight. Standing on a hill-top,—all around him as bare as barrenness itself can be—and so had been the scenery throughout this journey,—he would now look directly down on one of the most verdant and most perfectly beautiful spots on the face of the globe;—a mass of deepest and thickest verdure; a garden-like place, thirty miles or more in length by fifteen in width, all in the highest cultivation; palms, the most beautiful and graceful of trees ever seen in any country, waving their feathery tops, as, in groups or singly all over the landscape, they rose high above other trees of great variety and beauty; a large city also, with signs of wealth about it; palaces; a castle for defence; a hippodrome; an amphitheatre; villages and scattered dwellings, amid the unbroken garden; fountains and rivulets gleaming in the sunshine; a river meandering along the farther edge of this vast plain; beyond the river a narrow plain, backed with a range of lofty mountains; and on the right a lake or sea, stretching on, till hid by some mountain spurs.

The plain was that of Jericho; the city was one

called by the same name ; the river, the Jordan ; the wide expanse of water, the Dead Sea ; the mountains on the east, the range of Nebo, Moses' place of mysterious burial by unseen hands.

Even now, although almost entirely forsaken, and lying waste, this plain of Jericho still breaks most agreeably on the traveller's eyes, so long blinded by the glare from the white hills of the Wilderness. What, then, must it have been in those days we are speaking of, when Jericho was, among Jewish cities, exceeded in size only by Jerusalem ; and when the plain was the pride and boast of all the nation for its fertility, its extraordinary productions, and its climate (called " Egyptian,") seeming in temperature as if some choice spot of an intertropical country, with its heat, had been taken up and set down here in a region entirely different. This tropical nature of the climate made the place a favorite retreat, in winter, for those who might wish to escape the bleakness of the " Hill Country " of Judea, and of the capital itself.

The conformation of the ground here is singular. It looks as if an immense region had been scooped out of the general natural elevation in that country, making room for a great plain, for a sea, and for a river ; all sunk down to an unnatural depth. The Dead Sea, to which the southern end of this plain extends, has its surface, 1312 feet below that of the Mediterranean ;* and, therefore, a traveller coming from the " Hill Country " of Jerusalem, and the equally elevated grounds of the " Wilderness," seems here to descend into a chasm in the earth, which, indeed, is

* Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.

really the case. Yet in this chasm flows the Jordan, to discharge itself here into that sluggish lake ; and the plain of Jericho, which, at its southern end, borders on the Dead Sea, has but a small elevation above the stream. Travelling on the plain towards, the river, we come, on approaching it, to a descent of fifty or sixty feet ; then there is again a level for a short space, and then, about six feet below, is the Jordan, fringed with willows and rushes, its width here from eighty to a hundred feet, its depth ten or twelve, and its current very strong.*

The great depth of this plain, with the reflection of the sun upon it from the bare surrounding hills, will account for its tropical growth of plants and trees. The palm grew here in such luxuriance that in the days of Moses (Deut. xxxiv, 3,) Jericho was already designated as the "city of palm trees." Josephus speaks of the palms in his day, as being "of many sorts different from each other in taste and name:" and adds : "The better sort of them yield an excellent kind of honey, not much inferior in sweetness to other honey. This country will produce honey from bees : it also bears the balsam, which is the most precious of all the fruits in that place ; cypress trees also, and those that bear the myro-balsam ; so that he who should pronounce this place to be divine, would not be mistaken, wherein is such plenty of trees produced as are very rare and of the most excellent sort. And, indeed, if we speak of those other fruits, it will not be easy to light on any climate on the habitable earth, that can well be compared to it,—what is here sown comes up in such clusters : the cause of which seems

to me to be the warmth of the air, and the fertility of the waters ; the warmth calling forth the sprouts and making them spread, and the moisture making every one of them take root firmly, and supply that virtue which it stands in need of in summer-time.”* He adds : “The ambient air is here, also, of so good a temperature, that the people of the country are clothed in linen only, even when snow covers the rest of Judea.”

Herod the Great had built there a palace for himself, which was afterwards repaired and ornamented by Archelaus with great splendor : also an amphitheatre and a hippodrome, and, on a spur of mountain overlooking the city, a citadel, and in it a very fine and strong building dedicated to his mother, and called Cypros.†

The hippodrome had come, by and by, to have a strange history connected with it, one of the most singular in all the records of purposed crime. For Herod, when that dreadful disease which ended his life was growing upon him, and he found that he must die, determined that there should be, by compulsion, a general mourning throughout Judea at his death. He ordered the principal men of the Jewish nation to assemble at Jericho : and when they were there, had them shut up in the hippodrome. He now sent for his sister and her husband, and laid before them his plan, which was, that at his decease, his soldiers should be let loose upon these men, and all of them should be put to death, in order that “the whole nation should mourn from their very soul, which otherwise would be done in sport and mockery only. So

* Bel. iv, 8, § 3.

† Bel. i, 2, § 9.

he deplored his condition with tears in his eyes, and obtested them by the kindness owed from them as his kindred, and by the faith they owed to God, and begged of them that they would not hinder him of this honorable mourning at his funeral. So they promised him not to transgress his commands."* His orders, however, through the mercy of the intended executioners, were not carried into effect, which Josephus says was considered as a great "benefit" by the nation.

It is difficult to determine the northern limits of this plain, but it is about thirty miles from north to south, and fifteen in width.

The soil is described by Robinson as of extreme fertility, which was, in those ancient times, assisted by large and copious fountains, most of which still remain. About four miles from the Jordan is the fountain called now *Ain Hagila*, three and a half feet deep and of purest water, sending forth a stream which waters the whole plain below.† To the northwest of this, and also in the plain, is *Ain es Sultan*, bursting forth from the foot of a group of mounds which probably designate the site of the Jericho of Joshua's time, which seems after its destruction at that period never to have been rebuilt. This gives a supply of sweet water "which runs off through the plain in a stream twenty feet wide, and from eighteen inches to two feet deep, and afterwards divides into many little rivulets,"‡ used for irrigation: and, three miles northwest from this, is the still larger fountain of *Duk*, with a stream sufficient in volume to have formerly turned

* Jos. Antq. xvii, 6, § 5.

† Robinson.

‡ Durbin's Observations in the East.

mills, ruins of which are now on its banks.* In addition to this, there have been lately discovered portions of an immense reservoir, formed by damming up the waters of a valley (*Wady Kelt*) having its outlet into the plain on its western side, near the opening of which valley is supposed to have stood the Jericho of our Saviour's time.† Of the numerous artificial channels, elaborately constructed for distribution of all these waters, there are still extensive remains.

Bordering northwardly on the Wady Kelt, and just over this supposed site of the ancient city, is the Mount Quarantana, standing out, quite distinct from all the other bare hills, which, by their semi-circular sweep towards the west make room for this plain.

To a person standing on the plain, in the morning, and looking southwardly, a heavy fog in that direction usually shuts out all objects from the sight; but, as the sun gets higher in the sky, the mists roll heavily away, and that strange phenomenon, the Dead Sea, lies all exposed. The Jordan pours its waters into this sea, and there they are lost; there is no outlet to it, no life in it: every living thing that enters it dies; the wind sometimes ruffles the water, but the sullen, lead-like waves fall without any glad murmur upon the shore, and the surface soon subsides again to its dull appearance as of some immovable molten substance. When earthquakes shake the country around, there come up from the depth of this sea huge masses of asphaltum which float towards the shore, as if they might be dark messages of woe from the cities sunk beneath. Fruits growing by this sea, though fair to the eye, are found, when bitten into, to be composed of a film, for

* Robinson.

† Ibid.

the exterior, inside of which is only dust. An adventurous traveller, some years ago, launched a boat upon this sea, determined on explorations: he was found, a few days afterwards, on its banks, gasping and exhausted; was taken to Jerusalem, but scarcely lived to reach the city; the memory of what he saw perishing also with him. A party of our own countrymen, afterwards, made the attempt, and lived through it: but one, the bravest and the best, came from it drooping and sick, and died immediately afterwards at Beyrut, in a vain attempt to reach his home.—Near the southern end of the sea, the awe-struck visitors to its shores will find a hill entirely of salt; and will think of the strange circumstance attending Lot's family in the destruction which once came over this place.

The climate of the plain of Jericho is, in summer, insufferably hot, made more trying by a sight of the ice-clad peaks of Hermon looming up in the clear atmosphere, and distinctly visible, although 100 miles to the north. East of the Jordan, at this spot, is a plain about three miles wide, immediately beyond which rises the vast range of Mount Nebo; and both that mountain, and the plain between it and the river, had associations of absorbing interest in the Jewish mind. For, over this range, the immense hosts of their forefathers had poured down, and there on that plain they had rested,—after their journey from the place of bondage, their wanderings of forty years concluded now; and, on that high, sky-line of Nebo, Moses had stood, forbidden by the Almighty to go further; and there he had taken his view of the Promised Land. How attentively had he gazed over the whole region; his vision extending to the Medi-

terranean, whose gleaming waters were fully in sight ; to the sands of Arabia, spread out far to the south ; to the snowy Hermon on the north :—between them a fair, pleasant country,—but which he was not to enter.

This great leader and lawgiver—one of those men mentally and morally of colossal proportions, whom earth but rarely produces, he, who had spoken with God on Sinai, was forbidden to lead them further ; and, for an incident, which must have risen up in the Jewish memory at this time of the ministry of Christ with peculiar force. One rash word, spoken in anger, had caused this exclusion of Moses from the promised possession ; and this great range of Nebo, the barrier which he might not pass, was forever, to the Jewish mind a remembrancer of God's determination that no human being should ever dare to invade any divine right.

On one occasion during that long journey through the wilderness of Arabia, the people had been murmuring for water ; and Moses and Aaron were told by Jehovah to strike with their rod a certain rock, and that the water then would flow. They proceeded to the act, but gave not God the glory. "Hear, now, ye rebels ; must we fetch you water out of this rock ? * * And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have promised them."* Aaron was buried, during the long journey, on Mount Hor ; and here, on Nebo, the steps of Moses were stayed ; and there he died and was buried ; and that lofty mountain range before

* Numbers xx, 10-12.

Jericho, so strangely like an even wall or barrier built far up into the sky—told, and to the last will tell, of God's isolation in his Divine majesty and power. No man dare ever say **WE** before him in that greatness of his glory, or in the exercise of aught even of his communicated power. *Yet here was one.* He had just said, "I and my Father are one." He had repeatedly asserted prerogatives belonging only to God : the power to forgive sins ; the supreme seat in the great judgment to come, when all the world would be gathered before him, and he be seated in the glory, and power, and dominion belonging to Jehovah. When charged with making himself equal with God, he had not denied it ; and he was at this time at the Jordan, on his way to Jerusalem, where his entry into the city would be a triumphal one, and where the immense crowd attending and meeting him on the way would shout to him "Hosanna," that is, "Save, Lord, we beseech thee ;" "Hosanna in the highest ;" an invocation given only to God, but which was there to be allowed to Jesus without reproof or check.

And even here in Jericho, with Nebo looking down upon him, would be performed by him one of the greatest of those miraculous acts, to which he was always appealing as confirmation of the justness of his claims. God alone can perform a miracle. That is, only He who has established nature's laws as irrevocable can reverse them ; and here now, by that spot which Moses could not pass, because he had, on one occasion, not sanctified God, here God was going to establish, by his own act, the claims of him always asserting equality with God.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MESSIAH AT JERICO : BLIND MEN HEALED.

THE Messiah was now on his way once more towards Jerusalem. His disciples, on a former occasion, when he was about to go to Bethany in order to restore Lazarus, and had declared to them his intention of going into Judea, had said, in alarm, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?"* That subsequent miracle at Bethany had produced in the rulers a more deliberate and determined purpose to put him to death;† and now, when he indicated his intention of proceeding to Jerusalem, his followers showed both amazement and fear.‡ Their apprehensions, as they followed him from Perea, took a more gloomy cast from his own words on the way; for he began here to repeat what he had before intimated of the closing scenes of his ministry, only more definitely and more clearly, and with a declaration that these were near at hand. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and scourge him, and spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again."

The journey, therefore, along the roads of Perea,

* John xi, 8.

† lb., verse 53.

‡ Mark x. 32.

was a gloomy one. Dim as were the apprehensions of his disciples respecting the nature of his kingdom, they still understood language so unmistakable as this ; and saw that they were about to lose him, who had so long been their leader, and teacher, and their constant friend. Much there had been about him which they had tried in vain to comprehend ; but his kindness to them, even among the strange enigmas of his ministry, that had so much puzzled them, had been uniform ; and, even when he had observed occasion to reprove them, it had been done with such gentleness as to strengthen their attachment and love. One exception there was in this feeling of affection towards him, but that was not yet made clearly manifest. In following him, they had often been thrown into the society of opposers ; and sometimes they had been made to feel the secret force of hostility when people were backward in manifesting it towards himself. Questions innumerable concerning him had been propounded to them, often such as they were unable to answer, frequently on subjects puzzling to their own minds. They were Jews still, only half enlightened by all his teachings ; for the Jewish mind seemed to need a miracle to break through the old incrustations which enveloped it ; but their feelings were truer than their intellects, and in their hearts they had appreciated that grandeur in the character of Christ,—that true greatness which could afford to be humble ; the wonderful power, not in his teachings only, and his miracles, but in his gentleness and love to all, and especially to themselves.

Respecting his kingdom, promised by the Baptist, sometimes alluded to by himself, they had heard many

disputations among his friends and enemies, and in these they had often shared. Their interest in this subject was strong and personal. Ambition had its power over their hearts ; and, even during this sad journeying towards what their Master had declared would end presently in sufferings, and shame, and an ignominious death, James and John, aided by their mother, preferred a request, that they might have the preference (sit next to him) in his glory, respecting which, however, their ideas must have been very indistinct.

"Are ye able," he asked, "to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

"We are able."

"Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with : but to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

The ten heard of the request, and were indignant, and he took the occasion to enjoin humility and mutual kindness on all :—

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

No wonder that, amid all their darkness of intellect and selfishness of nature, their Divine Master was greatly admired and loved !

They crossed the Jordan, now for the last time with him ; and entered upon the garden-like plain of Jericho, which presented, at every step, scenes of

busy life. If anything could win an individual off from sad and disturbing thoughts, it might have been found in the sights now around them ; where the rivulets, led carefully from so many fountains, gurgled by the road-side ; or, crossing the path, were lost amid the profuse vegetation which they aided in this most prolific soil ; where fruits and flowers constantly greeted the eye ; and where birds were filling the air with their melody. The labor of the husbandman was here abundantly rewarded ; and a profitable trade existed between this favored region of gums and palms, and other parts of the country ; and also with foreign nations, among which, even at their courts, the balsams of Jericho were sought.

The business of a tax-gatherer here, was an unusually profitable one ; but here, as elsewhere, odious to the Jews. A man in that office might be thoroughly honest, and even far more than usually benevolent ; but he would still be looked upon with suspicion and dislike. He wore the Roman badge of servitude, and was connected with a class disreputable for extortions and overreaching ; and the wealthier a publican might be, with the more suspicion he would naturally be regarded. Zaccheus, the chief of these tax-gatherers at Jericho, was a man of the widest and largest charity, and of strictest probity also ; for, while the Jewish law required restitution two-fold in case of wrong-dealing, he gave back four-fold to any one whom he might unwittingly have injured. Yet he was " a sinner " in the estimation of the people here, and was so branded : his occupation alone was a sufficient cause for condemnation in their eyes.

He had heard of Christ : and there was very much

in these reports, not only to awaken curiosity, but to enlist his feelings of affection ;—for they spoke of the Messiah's wide benevolence, his kindness, his gentleness to all, mixed yet with power. He had never spurned any one seeking help : he had shown himself the friend of the humble and the slighted by the world ; publicans themselves had gathered around him, and had not been repelled. When charged with eating with such, and with sinners, he had said that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The heart of this man had warmed towards Christ :—and now this great and wonderful being was there in Jericho. But he, Zaccheus, repelled by the citizens, and taunted with sharp epithets, dare not thrust himself forward among that throng, which now, as the Messiah advanced along the highway, was continually growing more and more dense ; and, being a small man, there seemed to be no probability of his even getting a sight of him whom his heart was already prepared to reverence. But there is a tree* in that country with branches near to the ground ; and, one of these being just in advance, he hastened to it, and drew himself up till he could see over the heads of the advancing throngs.

They came on : and, now, opposite to him, was that face he had so longed to see ; that great being, of whose power and benevolence and divine wisdom he had heard so much.—But what was his astonishment when he found the eyes of the Messiah turned atten-

* The Syrian Sycamore ; entirely different from ours. See a drawing of it in "The Land and the Book," vol. i, p. 23.

tively upon him, as if in recognition ; and to hear himself addressed—

“ Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.”

If the tax-gatherer was astonished, equally so were the multitudes : and while the former hurried down, and joyfully accompanied the Messiah, a displeased murmur went among the people—“ that he had gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” They could not understand it :—and self-invited too ! “ Was he ignorant of the man’s occupation ”—thus the murmurs ran among the crowd—“ or was this done purposely to give an open defiance to all their prejudices and feelings of caste ; or was it done in contempt of themselves ?” Some turned away, in disgust : others followed to the door, curiosity still strongest in their minds : all were displeased.

In the meantime, the two, followed by the disciples, had entered the tax-gatherer’s house.—A stir and commotion within the dwelling at such an unexpected Presence : wondering looks fixed intently on that face of benignity and kindness ; peering eyes outside trying to have cognizance of what was going on :—such was the scene, as Zaccheus, standing before the Messiah, said, in a sort of defence of himself from what, he knew, was the general impression respecting his business and life—

‘ Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have taken anything from any man wrongfully, I restore him fourfold.’

“ This day is salvation come unto this house,”—was the answer, “ forasmuch as he also is a son of

Abraham. For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

But through all this scene in the receiver-general's house, and doubtless throughout the city also, there were rumors and whisperings foreign to the scene itself, greatly exciting the people wherever they were heard. These were, "That the *kingdom of God should immediately appear*."* The origin of the rumor was, doubtless, in a distorted report of the Messiah's recent declaration respecting his going up to Jerusalem. He was known to be on his way to that city. Something decisive it was believed, from his own words, was then to ensue. He had spoken of his death as to occur there, but also of his rising again. What could this last mean—they supposed—but the assumption of that earthly power and glory so long awaiting the Messiah,—prophesied of for so long a time? We shall see, in a few days, how strong was the under-current in his favor among all the multitudes, and how quickly it could bear them into open demonstrations in his favor. His fame had spread throughout the nation. People *felt* him to be great. This feeling of his greatness was that which led the Pharisees, after he had denounced them, to be so inveterate and so deadly in their hostility. A common man they could have disregarded. All felt that Christ was very far above that. His very humility of appearance gave to the mightiness of power evident in him, a stronger relief: his very gentleness and kindness made more striking the grandeur of character that sat so majestically, and, with this, so naturally on him, in all that he did and said. The Pharisees hated him, because he had all

this force, this grandeur, this wonderful Presence, which no humility in appearance or in life could annul or conceal;—which his humility only made more prominent and more striking: he was himself the truest exemplification of his doctrine, “The first shall be last; the last shall be first.”

So the Pharisees hated and feared him. He had denounced their hypocrisy and their abrogation of God’s law by their traditions. He was carrying the hearts of the people away from them, and they felt that their power was on the wane. The multitudes, although often murmuring at Christ’s words or actions, as in this recent one of going to be a guest with Zaccheus, still returned to him with new fealty and affection; for their hearts responded to his greatness without assumption, his force without harshness, his gentleness and kindness to every one.

He spent the Sabbath at Jericho. On his leaving the city, vast multitudes attended him; for, in addition to the usual curiosity, this new rumor of the mighty revolution soon to be—the new kingdom—was filling men’s minds, and occupying their tongues. Advancing onward, they had reached the edge of the city, the great crowd causing a bustle as they pressed around him; when, above all their noises, rose suddenly a distinct and most earnest cry,—

“Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!”

It ceased for a moment or two; and over, in the direction from which it had come were now heard angry objurgations, efforts to stifle the cry; but, immediately the voice rose louder than before, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!”

It was from a beggar, Bartimeus by name, a blind

man sitting by the road-side, that the cry had come. The sounds of an unusual crowd had fallen on his ear, as he sat there in his darkness; the light of broad day quenched to his sightless balls.—The multitude increased; and were excitedly talking as of something unusual on the road. He stopped his own petitions for alms to inquire what it meant; and was told that “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” What a thrill shot through the blind man! Jesus there! He raised the cry.

It was offensive, however, to many of the crowd; for SON OF DAVID was one of the titles which, in all Jewish belief, was to be applied to the Messiah; and unbelievers quickly threw in their angry commands to be silent: enraged men crowded about him; indignant, sharp tones and harsh words rung in his ear; but, with a blind man’s quick instincts, he understood, at once, both them and his only hope; and he cried out only the louder, in that cry of his earnest faith:

—Presently the angry men about him were pushed aside, and a friendly voice said,

“Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth for thee.”

Jesus had stopped, when the cry reached his ear; and had directed that he should be brought to him. The blind man, dropping his outer garment in the haste, was led—how he hurried those leading him, they seemed to be so slow!—and now he felt that he stood before the Messiah. The colloquy was too earnest to be other than brief.

“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”

“Lord, that I might receive my sight!”

“Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”

LIGHT! yes, there was light poured into those eyeballs: a world of faces flashed upon him, all with such intensified and startled looks;—all but one, and on that calmness and benevolence ruled; that gentle face of Him blessing, even in his very look, them who had faith for the blessing. Him he saw, and a loud cry of gratitude, and praise, and of glorifying God burst out; not from the healed man only, but from all the company around. They had gazed upon him as he had been led up;—saw his eager face; saw his hurried, agitated manner; saw his sightless eyeballs, showing that there was an utter blank there; heard the colloquy: and, gazing as if their whole souls were in their intensified look, saw these balls take clearness and expression of intelligence; saw the astonishment and joy in the man's face; and involuntarily they burst out, too, in loud glorifyings to God.

The restored man joined them most gladly in following Christ.*

Mark x, 46-52; Luke xviii, 35-43; Matt. xx, 30-34. Matthew speaks of two as being healed. It is probable that Bartimeus was the more noted of the two; and it is a maxim among critics *qui plura narrat pauciora complectitur: qui pauciora memorat plura non negat*; he who describes the larger number embraces in it the fewer: he who notices the fewer, does not deny the larger. A similar case occurs in Matt. viii, 28-31; Mark v, 1-21, and Luke viii, 26-40.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JERUSALEM.

THE interest of this history now concentrates at Jerusalem ; and the events which transpired there make it necessary to give a detailed description of the city itself. Jerusalem was unique, picturesque in its appearance, and, in some portions of it, grand ; a place well worthy of our minute attention, even apart from the sacred associations which it must always have in our minds.

The reader will imagine a valley running nearly north and south, (more accurately S. 5° W.)—the valley of Jehoshaphat, at the bottom of which, in the wet season, flowed the brook Kedron ; it was a dry water-course in the summer months. On the west side of this valley, we reach, by a steep ascent, at the height of 190 feet, the present surface of Moriah, which is 318 yards across. This has, for its western boundary, the valley of Tyropeon (also formerly the valley of Cheesemongers,) about half the depth of that of Jehoshaphat, and 117 yards in width. Crossing this valley westwardly, and again ascending to about the height of Moriah, we find ourselves on Mount Zion, “ beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth.”* This mountain (or rather hill) is 1020 yards across and three-fifths of a mile in length. On

* Ps. xlviii, 1.

the west and south of it passes the valley of Hinnom, shallow at first, but deepening as it goes southward, till at the south-west bend of Zion, it has a depth of 150 ; and finally where, after curving around Zion on the south and then taking an easterly course, it unites with the valley of Jehoshaphat, it has a depth of 300 feet. The Tyropeon, nearly at the point of junction, opens into both, and has in it, at its opening, the Pool of Siloam, placed by Milton (by poetic license) though half a mile distant, "fast by the oracles of God." Our imaginary journey, as the reader perceives, was from east to west ; it passed just by the southern edge of the temple enclosure, which enclosure was to the northeast of Zion, a high stone bridge across the Tyropeon uniting the two. Some remains of this bridge, at its eastern end, yet exist, forming still a portion of an arch, and Robinson, on measuring some of its stones found them twenty and a half to twenty-four and a half feet in length ; they are ornamented on their front with the raised pannel common to all that remains of the larger structures in Jerusalem. The portion of Moriah south of the temple enclosure sunk rapidly into a broken and rocky surface, and was probably occupied by gardens in the ancient times.

The city wall, on the west and south, kept along the edge of the almost precipitous descent to the valley of Hinnom, until the Tyropeon was reached, when, stretching across this, and then over the low southern portion of Moriah, it skirted the valley of Jehoshaphat till it reached the southeastern angle of the great wall supporting the temple platform. On the north side of Zion the wall also skirted the edge of

the mountain, there on the verge of a descent of thirty cubits,* and finally crossed the Tyropeton to the western wall of the temple enclosure.

In the course of time, a larger space was needed for the city ; and a hill, called Acra, closely adjoining Zion on the north, and like that also "surrounded by deep valleys,"† was also enclosed by a wall carried along on the edge of its precipices, except where this crossed the lower ground to be united with the wall of Zion, at a gate called Gennath : on the east, this wall of Arca joined the tower of Antonia, situated at the northwest angle of the temple enclosure.

The city, however, grew finally even beyond Acra, and a large space of ground, north and east of that hill, reaching to the valley of Jehoshaphat, was covered with houses ; but this, called Bezetha, was not inclosed in our Saviour's time, the wall afterwards bounding it on three sides, having been built by Agrippa at a period shortly subsequent to the crucifixion.

Zion, Moriah, and Arca, although called mountains, in historical descriptions, did not rise above the general level of the country adjacent, and could be termed such only in consequence of being isolated by the surrounding valleys : but all this region had a considerable elevation above the Mediterranean, Zion being 2,200 feet and the Mount of Olives 2,396 above the level of that sea. The latter mountain rose eastwardly from the brook Kedron by very rapid ascents ; and, from its summit commanded, a full view of the city and temple grounds, and of a large extent of country in every direction. Eastwardly, the view from it takes

* Jos. Bell. v, 4, § 4.

† Ib. v. § 1.

in the bed of the Jordan and northern portion of the Dead Sea.*

Let a spectator be supposed, then, in those ancient times to be seated on the Mount of Olives, and gazing down over Jerusalem. He would perceive that the general level of the city inclined to the eastward ; and that every object was thus brought distinctly into view. The whole was like a map at his feet. Prominent over all, as well as nearest to him, would be the 'Mountain of the House,' that huge mass of masonry, composed of large stones with paneled faces, and rising to a height that overtopped every thing else, as if jealous respecting its pre-eminence. In fact, the summit of Acra, which was originally higher, had been cut down in order that "the temple might be superior to it."* From his elevation on the Mount of Olives, he would be able to look over the ramparts of this outer wall of the temple enclosure ; and to see within it the long cloisters with their marble columns in triple or quadruple rows, and the great marble-paved court : he would see, then, rising on this platform, the more sacred courts reached by great ranges of marble steps, and by huge doors glittering with gold and silver ; and finally the temple itself, its front 100 cubits wide and as many in height, "covered all over with plates of gold." The great altar would be sending up the smoke from its sacrifices ; and, even at his elevation, he might hear the chanting from the many voices of worshipers, or the trumpets and other instruments sounded from the steps of the temple by the altar.

Then, below, and where stretched that high stone

* Jos. Bel. v, 4, § 1. Ib. v, 5, § 6.

bridge connecting Moriah with Zion, would be multitudes passing between the temple and the city.

The picturesque outline of the city walls would next, perhaps, attract the notice of the spectator; for as they were erected mostly on the edges of the precipices, their battlemented outline, and the numerous towers built to strengthen them, would all stand distinctly out before his eye. Some of these towers had a singular combination of solidity below, with an airy and delicate architecture above. The solid impenetrable substructure of one of them, Hippicus, at the northwest corner of Zion, still remains, the raised pannels on its stones giving a good architectural effect to the solid unbroken wall. Just eastward of Hippicus, and forming part of the defences at the northern end of Zion, were two other principal towers, one of which we will allow Josephus to describe: "The second tower which he [Herod the Great] named from his brother Phasaelus, had its breadth and its height equal, each of them forty cubits; over which was its solid height of forty cubits; over which a cloister went round about, whose height was ten cubits, and it was covered from enemies by breastworks and bulwarks. There was also built over that cloister another tower, parted into magnificent rooms, and a place for bathing; so that this tower wanted nothing that might make it appear to be a royal palace. It was also adorned with battlements and turrets, more than was the foregoing; and the entire altitude was about ninety cubits."* It will be remembered that it stood on the edge of a descent of thirty cubits. Hippicus was smaller, but similarly

* Jos. Bel. v, 4, § 3.

ornamented ; and just eastward of Phasaclus, and in the same wall, was the tower Mariamne, named after Herod's late wife, smaller also than the latter, but "its upper buildings were more magnificent and had greater variety than the other towers had." "Now, as these towers," says Josephus, "were tall, they appeared taller by the place on which they stood ; for that very old wall wherein they were, was built on a high hill, and was itself a kind of elevation that was still thirty cubits taller, over which the towers were situated, and thereby were made much higher to appearance." The other towers in the line of walls were inferior in ornament, but "the niceness of the joints and the beauty of the stones were in no way inferior to those of the holy house itself." These towers were twenty cubits wide, and as many in height ; and above this solid substructure were rooms "of great magnificence," and cisterns for rain-water : Acra had forty and Zion sixty of such towers attached to their walls. "The whole compass of the city [including Bezetha] was thirty-three furlongs," or about four miles and a quarter of our measure ; the dimensions, not large ; but we must remember that the cities of that region are compactly built, the streets being frequently only four or five feet in width.

The palace of Herod the Great and its grounds were among the most striking features of the city ; and for these, lest any other description may seem extravagant, we will again resort to Josephus. He had just been describing the towers Mariamne and Phasaclus in the northern wall of Zion, and he adds : "Now as these towers were themselves on the north side of the wall, the king had a palace inwardly

thereto adjoined, which exceeds all my ability to describe it ; for it was so curious as to want no cost or skill in its construction, but was entirely walled about to the height of thirty cubits, and was adorned with towers at equal distances, and with large bed-chambers, that would contain beds for a hundred guests a-piece, in which the variety of the stones is not to be expressed ; for a large quantity of those that were rare of the kind was collected together. Their roofs were also wonderful, both for the length of the beams and the splendor of their ornaments. The number of the rooms was also very great, and the variety of the figures that were about them was prodigious ; their furniture was complete, and the greatest part of the vessels that were put in them was of silver and gold. There were, besides, many porticos, one beyond another, round about, and in each of these porticos curious pillars ; yet were all the courts that were exposed to the air everywhere green. There were moreover several groves of trees, and long walks throughout them, with deep canals, and cisterns, that in several parts were filled with brazen statues, through which the water ran.”*

There was another palace on Acra, of which, however, we have no definite account. The castle of Antonia, joined to the northwest angle of the temple, was also a conspicuous object, both on account of its situation, with one turret overtopping the temple precincts and looking directly down into its courts, and also for its vastness and magnificence ; “for the inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other con-

* Jos. Bel. 4, v, § 4.

veniences, with a court, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps : insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, it might seem to be composed of several cities, but by its magnificence it seemed a palace ; and as the entire structure resembled that of a tower, it contained also four other distinct towers at its four corners ; whereof the others were but fifty cubits high ; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was seventy cubits high ; that from thence the whole temple might be viewed.”*

The walls and towers were constructed with the white limestone, (Josephus calls it white marble,) of that region ; a large portion of which was probably taken from beneath the city itself. Some curious persons, lately observing a small hole just outside the present northern city wall not unlike a burrow in the banks of a rabbit warren, enlarged it a little ; and they presently slid down into a subterranean chamber, about seven hundred feet long from north to south, and from three to four hundred feet in width, the height from ten to fifty feet. It is all cut in the solid rock, with rude pillars at intervals to support the roof. A recent explorer says, “ It was evidently a quarry, and I could see that the stones were all hewn and polished on the spot. On every side were immense piles of chippings, still bearing, like the rocky walls, the marks of the chisel. At the extreme end several huge blocks remain, not completely dislodged. From hence down to Moriah is an easy slope, along which they could easily have been rolled ;” and the floor of the chamber is descending, and in several places is hewn smooth. This quarry seems

* Jos. Bell. v. 5, § 8.

to have been under Acra. Doubtless there are many chambers and passages under Jerusalem, yet unknown.

The grounds beyond the walls were covered over with gardens, among the enclosures of which the Roman soldiers, in the first assaults by Titus, became entangled, and suffered bloody defeats. On the south of the city were the "king's gardens," and where the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat unite is still the well called after Nehemiah, which often overflows and refreshes the flat surface adjoining. The broken ground forming the southern end of the sacred Moriah, appears also to have been given up to shrubbery and trees. The Mount of Olives is still remarkable for the number of olive trees scattered over its slopes.

Many a person has stayed his steps on the heights of this latter mountain, to gaze long on that scene below ;—on the city, like a hive of human beings, many of its common structures, doubtless, giving evidence of the wealth which the whole world poured toward Jerusalem :—on the battlemented walls and the numerous towers with their turrets, all, from their position, brought into strong relief ;—on the castles and palaces, and the long, high bridge between Moriah and Zion, with its numerous passengers in full view ;—on the beautiful green frame work of gardens surrounding the city ;—and especially on the Mountain of the House, lifting its crowning splendor of the temple high in the air ; the glitter of its gold partly hid by the smoke from the sacrificial altar curling upward, while were heard the sounds from the worshipers there, now sinking into low

notes of music, and now rising in the loud hallelujahs and filling the air with their melody.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

THE Messiah was now on his way to the celebration of the Passover festival ; and, in the evening of the day in which he cured Bartimeus, as he was leaving Jericho, he arrived at Bethany, there to spend the night.

On the morrow, it quickly became evident that the public enthusiasm respecting him was going to break through all bounds, and to make a demonstration of itself such as had never yet been seen. The rumor, "*that the kingdom of God should immediately appear,*" was still spreading, and people were wrought up to a state of the highest expectancy ;—the excitement all the greater in consequence of the vagueness of their surmisings, in which both curiosity and imagination had the widest scope. He was now in Bethany, where he had raised the dead : what could not power such as that effect ? Bartimeus and his companion had followed him, full of enthusiasm and ready to testify to every one whom they met, what had been done for them : many of those around Christ, had themselves witnessed this wonderful act. The excited company at Bethany was soon increased in consequence of the circulation of this new and stirring rumor in Jerusalem itself, and among the throngs already come up to

the festival. For, although it wanted yet four days to the Passover, large numbers* had assembled, some of them from distant lands.† Strangers and citizens were full of excitement; and the feeling respecting Christ, which had been kept hushed through fear of the rulers, and had dared to show itself only in whispers, was now beginning to take an outspoken and decisive character. "How was this new kingdom to be established?"—The bitter hostility of the rulers towards him was well known: their plots for his death were also surmised. His denunciations of the hypocrisy of most of them had been public. "Would vengeance now overwhelm them, and make clear the way for his supremacy?" "What would this new kingdom be?"—We may well imagine what an excitement such surmisings would occasion amid a demonstrative people, such as they were; and, amid it, the contagion of enthusiasm for the Messiah, was every hour more and more widely spread.

He had himself sent two of his disciples, early in the morning, to a spot in the neighborhood of Bethany, where they were to find an ass and her colt tied, which they were to bring to him. The owner, when informed who needed them, gave his immediate consent. There was an old prophecy by Zechariah, whose favorite theme had been the coming of the Messiah, and whose words were, therefore, greatly treasured by the Jews: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly and sitting upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."‡ Even his triumphs were not to

* John xii, 12.

† Ib. verse 20.

‡ ix, 9

contribute to human pride. Kings advancing towards their capitals in triumphal processions, choose all the pomp and circumstance that can dazzle men's eyes ; and all the glory that earth can afford is put in requisition, amid which the recipient of honors advances with a heart swelling in gratified ambition. What a contrast here, where even the triumph carried with it its lessons to pride and pomp ; where gentleness ruled ; and where the emotion most manifest was in tears over approaching human woes.

The principal road from Jericho through Bethany to Jerusalem has probably, now, exactly the course that it had in those ancient times. The Mount of Olives has three principal elevations, and between the middle and southern of these a footpath crosses, forming a direct but a somewhat steep and difficult way. The caravan road ascends slantingly, and turns over the southern end of the mountain, though still at a considerable elevation, and then slants downward by a long, easy descent to the bridge over the Kedron ; whence it passes, by zigzags, up the steep sides of Moriah. This latter road was, doubtless, the one chosen on the present occasion. At its highest point, the city and Mount Moriah burst suddenly upon the view ; and Zion having a slight inclination to the eastward, all the picturesque beauty as well as grandeur of Jerusalem is there displayed to the eyes. The slanting descent thence to the Kedron, is nearly a mile in length ; and most of it is in full view from any part of Jerusalem.

The numbers attending Christ had multiplied, and as they advanced along the roads towards the city the excitement constantly increased. They had an

indefinable idea that something extraordinary was to occur ;—the kingdom of heaven immediately to appear ; and the accordancy of the present scene with their ancient prophecy,—the unusual manner of the Messiah's approach to the city,—roused their expectations into the strongest enthusiasm. "Tell ye the daughters of Zion, Behold thy king cometh : " and truly he was there ! His kingdom mistaken, but the mistake adapted only to increase the powerful sensation. The enthusiasm presently broke through all the bounds that had been imposed by the fear of their rulers ; the people from other parts of the country being, indeed, less fettered by this than the residents in Jerusalem. These, as they hurried out in great numbers to meet the procession, gathered up palm branches,* such as they were accustomed to wave in their Hallel's to Jehovah at the Feast of Tabernacles ; and soon the cry arose, both among those preceding and those following the Messiah, "Hosanna," (that is, "Save, Lord, we beseech thee,") "Hosanna in the highest," "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord : peace in heaven and glory in the highest." It was as if the temple service had been transferred to the heights of Olivet, the open mountain serving as God's grandest of sanctuaries, with spontaneous worship poured out there from overflowing hearts. Christ's enemies had quickly taken the alarm ; and Pharisees mixing with the crowd, cried out to him, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." But, far from disclaiming this worship paid to him as God, he replied, "If they should hold their

* John xii, 12, 13.

peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Their worship received no rebuke.

This whole scene was in full view from the city, and people there turned or gathered in groups to gaze with extreme wonder at the sight. Fresh multitudes were hurrying up the mountain, attracted by the flying rumors: the enthusiasm was contagious, and all were equally joining in the hosannas. "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," was repeated among the cries: and the throngs were now cutting branches from the trees, and strewing them, as also their garments, in the way,* before the Messiah, tokens of honor usually shown to eastern kings in those days.†

It had become a triumphal procession; and the shouts of "Hosanna in the highest," "Blessed is the kingdom of our Father David that cometh in the name of the Lord," "Hosanna to the Son of David,"

* Matt. xxi, 8.

† Tholuck, *in loco*. The Targum on Esther, x, 15, says, "when Mordecai went forth from the gate of the king's house, the streets were covered with myrtle and the porches with purple. See also 2 Kings ix, 13.

The following singular incident is from Robinson's *Researches*, Vol. ii, p. 162: "At that time [just after the rebellion, in 1834, against the Egyptian conscription] when some of the inhabitants [of Bethlehem] were already imprisoned, and all were in deep distress, Mr. Farran, then English consul at Damascus, was on a visit to Jerusalem, and had ridden out with Mr. Nicolayson to Solomon's pool. On their return, as they rose the ascent to enter Bethlehem, hundreds of the people, male and female, met them, imploring the consul to interfere in their behalf, and afford them his protection; and all at once, by a sort of simultaneous movement, they 'spread their garments in the way' before the horses. The consul was affected to tears, but had, of course, no power to interfere."

"Save, Lord, we beseech thee," floated over Moriah and over Zion ;—a worship, the spontaneity and heartiness of which were manifest to every one who heard.

—But suddenly the noises ceased ; and all turned to look in new wonder at him, who was the centre and the object of the demonstration.

He was weeping.

Had they been Pharisees and scribes around him, using taunts and threatenings, he could have met their insults with unruffled feelings ; but these rejoicings of friends and these strong demonstrations of affection melted his heart into tenderness, as he thought of the doom gathering over the city there spread out, and so fair to look upon : and which would soon leave scarcely a vestige behind ; its people, and the hundreds of thousands who gathered there from all countries, after indescribable sufferings, massacred, or tortured to death, or carried into slavery in distant lands. His prescient eye saw the Roman legions encircling the place ; saw the rush of combatants ; his ear heard the shouts of rage or despair ; he saw dying and dead covering mountainsides and valleys, after the fierce sorties. He saw the Roman lines of circumvallation ; and the sickening scenes within them, throughout the city, as famine did its horrible work, till even a mother could feed on her own child ; saw the madness of sectaries among the people, till Jew was murdering Jew, and the streets were running with blood, and were covered with corpses in the fratricidal combats :—saw, finally, the assault, the last struggles of the people, not for life, but in the madness of death, as the for-

eign hordes filled the streets and houses ; saw the temple on fire, and people throwing themselves by hundreds from its battlements to the great depths below, resistance over—only death now left.

He was weeping—and the crowds so lately filling the air with their joyful cries and their hymns of hosannas, stood now silent, looking on with curiosity and wonder. He said :

“ If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave one stone upon another ; because thou knowest not the times of thy visitation.”

They heard him with very deep sadness ; but their reverence and demonstrations of affection were unabated, as the procession moved on, and so continued down the mountain, and across the Kedron, and as they ascended by the eastern gate into the corridors of the temple.

The whole city was, by this time, in a state of excitement ; and people were hurrying about with inquiries, what it meant ? When they found, at last that the noises,—the hosannas, and exclamations were ascending now from the temple courts, thither streamed the vast city population,—Pharisees, Scribes, Rabbis, the common multitudes,—all in confusion hastening there with the hurried question :

“ Who is this ? ” The crowds there answered :

“ This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.”*

Immediately some left the crowd, hurrying back to their homes. In those homes and along the streets were the decrepid, the diseased, and the blind : and friends hastened now to them, with the thrilling intelligence that Jesus, with his miraculous healing powers, was in the temple. What news to them ! With outstretched arms, and appealing voices, they begged to be carried or led : and, very soon, the throngs about Christ were pushed asunder by eager men forcing openings amongst their dense masses, carrying the diseased, or by blind men, with objurgations and entreaties in the same breath, making their eager way, disregarding alike of priest, or Rabbi, or commoner ; only one thought filling their whole soul—that wild, strange hope that they might receive sight and be cured ;—their hope forcing every thing aside, so that they might be quickly before Christ.

The throngs yielded readily, when they saw the cause ; for the expectation of witnessing miracles, became immediately as intense almost as was the hope of the infirm themselves. The lame were before him : they were healed. The blind pressed into his presence, and stood there for a moment or two, with faces showing the wrought-up feelings within, and with their sightless eye-balls so drearily blank and sadly disfiguring. But only for a moment : for, at the word from Christ, those eye-balls changed ; a perceptive power had shot in them : the intensely earnest and entreating countenance was suddenly brightened with an expression of wildness of delight ; the spectators saw how perfect the cure was ; and all

* Matt. xxi, 10, 11.

mingled with the joyful cry of the relieved men, their shouts of praises and of glorifying God. No wonder that there rang through all those courts of the temple, such spontaneous, heartfelt strains of thanksgiving as had never been heard there before ; and could have never been known in the formal hymns and ceremonies of the priests. No wonder that the hosannas rose up louder and louder, shout after shout, as new and still more extraordinary cases of curing occurred ; and that the children who had crowded there with the rest, and are always, in their warm, fresh hearts, quick in sympathies with sorrow and joy, and quick for open demonstrations, joined readily in the cry,

“Hosanna to the Son of David : Hosanna to the Son of David,” which was repeated everywhere, in the courts.

But there were also intensely angry faces among the crowds ; and presently men rushed up to the Messiah,—chief-priests and scribes they were,—with the exclamation :

“Hearest thou what they say ?”

Indeed the cry, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” was a full acknowledgment of his Messiahship ; and unchecked as it was by him, it filled up the measure of these men’s indignation and rage. They had witnessed the miracles just performed ; but sympathy with distress was extinguished by malice, and by seeing how the crowds were carried away by his merciful deeds. They gnashed their teeth at the hosannas so broadly expressive, and broke in with the inquiry above :

“Hearest thou what they say ?”*

* Matt. xxi, 15, 16.

"Yea : have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?"*

*It was a favorite method with the Messiah to parry their malicious assaults with some question which they could not answer, or which threw them into confusion, in which they lost their power to hurt.

The Pharisees said among themselves, as they retired, discomfited from the scene,

"Perceive ye that ye prevail nothing ? Behold the world is gone after him."†

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AT THE TEMPLE.—WOES DENOUNCED.

THE Messiah returned that evening to the quiet of Bethany, leaving behind him, however, in Jerusalem, an agitated people, full of emotions of various kinds. The hosannas, long after night had spread its silence over the city, seemed to the rulers to be still ringing in their ears ; and the scenes on the side of Olivet, and in the temple,—the outburst of enthusiasm among the populace—the miraculous cures and consequent rejoicings were still haunting them, long after they had retired to their homes.

Their chagrin was not allayed the next morning by rumors of fresh occurrences ; namely, that Christ was again in the temple, and was a second time cleansing it of the abominations, which, notwithstanding

* Ps. viii, 2.

† John xii, 19.

ing his former driving out of the *Colbonists* and the sellers of oxen and birds, had been renewed in the temple courts. "It is written," he said, "My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Many of the people had suffered from the haughtiness and extortions of the *Colbonists*; and were glad now to see severity used upon them, and the convictions of all were with him, as regarded the desecration of the temple, where chaffering was taking the place of prayer, where the lowing of cattle was mingled with the sounds of people's devotions, and the spirit engendered was that of greedy trade.

When the place had been cleansed and order restored, the Messiah proceeded to teach in the cloisters; the multitudes still retaining the enthusiasm of the previous day, and listening with the deepest earnestness to his doctrines. But, mingling with them, were men bent on his destruction, provoked to still greater wrath by the events of the morning, and by seeing how, in every act, whether of gentleness and healing, or of force, he was carrying with him, and from these rulers, the affections of the people. They "feared him because all the people were astonished at his doctrine."* In the evening he returned again to Bethany.

On the next day he came again to the temple, and recommenced his teaching, when the chief priests, and elders, irritated beyond endurance, made an effort to overpower him by an official demand respecting his power to teach.

"By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"

Their object was, doubtless, to bring him into discredit with the people by making it evident that he had received no scholastic training, and had no diploma from the Rabbis : but it was defeated in a very simple manner. Indeed, the simplicity of means by which, often, their chicanery was foiled, is one of the most striking things in his encounters with these men. He said :

"I will also ask you one thing ; and answer me, The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of man ?"—They saw the drift of the question, and hesitated. If they should say from heaven, he would ask, why then do ye not believe him ? "If of earth"—so they murmured to each other,—“ then the people will stone us : for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.” They answered :

"We cannot tell."

"Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

He spoke now in parables;† and the closing part of one of these must have startled that assembly, and put in jeopardy even the attachment of the people listening so attentively to every word. He often thus startled his friends by the utterance of loud and daring truths. The words now referred to were, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The Pharisees knew that the application was particularly to themselves, and gnashed their teeth with impotent rage; their wish to lay hands on him being

* Mark xi, 27-33.

† See Matt. xxi, 28-32 and 33-46; xxii, 1-14.

restricted by a fear of the multitude, who, though startled, still adhered to him as a prophet.

But the malice of these leaders could not be subdued. They had determined on his destruction, and were consulting "that they might put Lazarus also to death; because by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus."* They glared like chained ravenous beasts on this scene, where the crowds were hanging with rapt attention on the words of Christ: and, presently, having failed in the attempt to bring him into disrepute by questioning his authority to teach, they tried a new device in which they hoped to entangle him in his speech. Uniting again in a strange fellowship with their opponents, the Herodians, they sent some of their disciples with the latter; and both having made their way up to the Messiah, they began in a suspiciously-complimentary address:

"Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the persons of men. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

If he should answer in the negative, the Herodians were there to accuse him of hostile feeling towards the Roman government; if in the affirmative, he must excite the hostility of the Jews, to whom the tribute was hateful in its nature, and burdensome from its excess.

He saw their cunning, and the wickedness in their apparent compliment that he cared for no man, nor regarded the persons of men.

* John xii, 10, 11.

“ Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ? Show me the tribute money.”

A penny (a *Roman denarius*) was brought.

“ Whose is this image and superscription ?” They told him it was Cæsar’s.

“ Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s ; and unto God the things that are God’s.”

They gained nothing from this attempt ; and another was now made by the Sadducees, unbelievers in any future state. They came to him propounding a certain case, intended to perplex any opponent to their doctrine ; and they were answered : and then came a lawyer, “ tempting him :”

“ Master, which is the great commandment in the law ?” He answered :

“ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

He himself became interrogator now.

“ What think ye of Christ ? Whose son is he ?”

The Pharisees answered, “ The son of David ;” and some questions on this subject finished the colloquy, and the public efforts of his enemies on this day.

—But it did not finish the exciting scenes in those temple courts. It was a mixed assemblage there ; the rulers, Scribes and Pharisees ; the disciples ; the vast multitude, which had been increasing every day, at Jerusalem, for the Passover, and which had gathered up here to hear the words of this Wonderful Person. He turned now to these last and to his disciples,

and cautioned them against the Scribes and Pharisees, showing how their precepts were belied by their conduct ; and denouncing their hypocrisy and vain-gloriousness, their impositions on the people, and their assumptions. Of persons wishing to be his own followers, he said,

“ But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased : and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

He turned then to the Scribes and Pharisees themselves. His words just spoken had excited the astonishment of the multitudes ; for they were not accustomed to hear their religionists spoken of publicly in this bold, denunciatory style ; and the leaders themselves had winced repeatedly, as, with many a scowling look and many a vow of vengeance, they had listened to what they dared not dispute with one who seemed to penetrate their hearts, and who knew their lives so well. They saw, also, the looks of the people, even through the marks of astonishment, approving and assenting to what he said ; and witnessed, with horrified forebodings, the enthusiasm he was lighting up in the hearts of the multitudes, who were evidently fast sliding away from the Pharisaic rule. But there was little time for their observation of others ; for he turned now directly to themselves ; and their blood curdled and boiled with rage, at words which now fell on their ears.

“ Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers : therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte ; and when he is made, ye make him tenfold more the child of hell than yourselves.

“Woe unto you, ye blind guides, who say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing ; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind. * * * *

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithes of anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith : these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat,* and swallow a camel.”

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within ye are full of extortion and excess. * *

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous. * * * Where-

* In a former page it was noticed that they strained the water for drinking, lest they might inadvertently swallow unclean animals : the camel was also an unclean animal.

fore be ye witness unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets.

“Fill ye up, then, the measure of your forefathers.

^ Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”* * * *

It was terrible; and the people stood with silent astonishment, and with awe, wondering to hear denunciations poured out, in this burning, lava-like stream, on the sanctimonious-looking men lately so lordly and pretentious, now standing mute in self-conviction or in rage. It must have been a strange thing, too, to see those features of Christ, usually marked with such gentleness, mingled with grandeur, now worked up into an expression awful in its power, as if the terribleness of the final judgment-seat were here being anticipated and exhibited on Moriah's temple heights. They gazed with wonder on that face, lighted up as they had never seen it before; they trembled at words so terrible;—the more terrible because the multitudes felt their justice upon men whom their better feelings had long taught them to doubt, though fear had kept them in restraint. There was a mighty eloquence in the words, a mightier force in the oratory itself, and a horror of doom in the terrible climax, that held the people in breathless wonder, and filled them with awe. If to any one now the words seem to be too terrible, we must remember that these were men who, wicked at heart, were making the highest claims for sanctity, and were exercising the largest power over the nation; giving tone to society, and character to the country, in the eyes of people, both at home and abroad.

They were, above all, the conservators of that mysterious, terrible, unwritten law, which might be moulded into any form ; and, in every form, was claiming a power greater than God's own Word. The use it could be put to he shows in this address ; but, doubtless, we have exhibited to us only a small portion of the abuses of which it was the origin. The people had always succumbed to these men : it was fit that the nation should be aroused, as if by a peal of thunder, and, if it were yet possible, should be disenthralled.

But, presently, the language changed. The speaker turned from the woes to a rapid sketch of the murderous persecutions these men would soon instigate and carry out, on "prophets, and wise men, and scribes," coming after him ; and to notice the terrific visitations gathering over the city, in consequence of their iniquitous rule ; and then he broke out in that lamentation over Jerusalem, to which, for pathetic force of language, there is not an equal anywhere in history.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

Doubtless it was this lament, which, when these exciting scenes were all over, and he was preparing, towards evening, to leave the courts, led the disciples to

* Matt. xxiii, 1-39.

say, as they pointed to the temple, its "goodly stones and gifts,"

"Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings!"

They thought, perhaps, that the sacredness of the spot, and the costliness of the work and offerings, a hearty tribute of the nation to God, might produce an exception to the foretold doom : but there was to be none.

"Seest thou these great buildings!" he answered ; "there shall not be one stone left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

—A quiet evening, after so exciting a day, fell on the Messiah and his disciples as they were ascending Olivet on their way to Bethany once more : the last night—it was to be—which the Master was to spend in that house of kind and hospitable friends.

On the top of the mountain he sat down, for a while, by the road-side, over against the temple,† and against all that fair scene, of city and country below : temple, palaces, battlements, towers, and the great hives of human habitations, all distinctly in sight. The smoke of the evening sacrifices was ascending up ; the evening sounds of a large city (the sounds never noisy, as with us—no rattling of carriages—but more gentle,) filled the air ; it was such a quiet, and calm, and fair scene, that it might seem as if to last forever ; so little there appeared outwardly to court danger, and so much in it all of mild enjoyment and repose.

But within the walls there were fierce and hellish passions at work in the hearts of rulers ; and secret-

* Mark xiii, 1, 2.

† Mark xiii, 3.

ly, and with silent steps the ruin of Jerusalem was now drawing near.

As the Messiah sat there by the road-side gazing down, with eyes in which such anticipations might be read, the disciples came to him, and said privately,

“ Master, but when shall these things be ? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass ? ” He replied,

“ Take heed, that ye be not deceived ; ”* and he gave them signs by which they might know of the approach of the final catastrophe to Jerusalem ; † by observing which afterwards, it was doubtless, that so many of the Christians, taking refuge in other cities, were then saved. But the scene which he sketched, there, to the disciples, of their own future, must have been appalling, even with the dimness of comprehension, and the mistakes which still affected their minds. He said,

“ They shall deliver you up to councils ; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten ; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for a testimony against them.” ‡ “ They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name’s sake.” “ Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In patience possess ye your souls.” §

He promised them supernatural help, which at that

* Luke xxi, 7.

† Matt. xviv, 15-28 ; Luke xxi, 20-37.

‡ Mark xiii, 9.

§ Luke xxi, 12-19.

time, could be but imperfectly understood by them ; but he called them to meet dangers, of which they did have a clear comprehension :—the hatred of all men, betrayals, insults, violent death.

The world has never yet appreciated the heroism of Christianity, perhaps never will appreciate it. The milder qualities of that religion,—gentleness, peacefulness, and other traits—meekness and forgiveness of injuries—considered mean-spirited by the world,—are so much oftener dwelt upon in men's minds with sensations of shrinking from them, that the great, noble heroism of Christianity is unappreciated. This itself is also not an impressive heroism except on peculiar and rare occasions ; for its acts lie in *in self-conquest deep in our hearts* ; in a fixedness of endurance which insults cannot shake ; and in a preparedness for death itself, in the Master's cause, if that should be required. Persecutions to this last extent do not often occur now ; but the heroism *to meet* them must be received into every man's heart, before he can be a Christian in truth. The Master led the way in this, knowing all the horror, and feeling it : yet meeting it still. He called his disciples to it, here, on the mountain-side, not disguising any part, but showing clearly what they had to meet ; he requires it of his followers now ;—*the highest and noblest feeling in man, courage unto death for a principle and through love*. Such is Christianity if received into our soul ; such in its incipiency, in its constant staying there—and to the last gasp of our life.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PLOT.

WHILE the concluding events of the last chapter were occurring, the Sanhedrim were in session in the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, with the determined purpose to take Jesus *by subtilty* and to kill him;* and the seizure, in order to be successful, they believed must be effected by night; not by day. For the popularity of the Messiah among the multitudes was now so great that an open, public attempt would only recoil upon themselves.

They believed that it was necessary now, for something decisive to be done, and that their action must be prompt. The scenes that day in the temple showed that there could be no circumventing him, or bearing him down by their weight of authority, and that, by no cunning could he be made to commit himself in the eyes of the government or of the people. In all such plots they had met with worse than defeat. And the closing scenes at the temple, the warnings against them, and those woes had stung them into a rage which demanded only one result.

But even among themselves, there were, now, men secretly favoring Christ; kept from avowing it, through fear of their compeers, and of the decree that any one acknowledging him should be excommunicated. "They loved the praises of men more than the praise of God:"† and perhaps no better example of the

* Matt. xxiv, 8-5.

† John xii, 42, 43.

crushing weight of the Pharisaic power could be given than this awe felt by part of the rulers themselves, sealing the mouth and preventing any outward demonstration, although in their secret conscience believing in Christ. We are soon to have, in events to be detailed, an exemplification of the subtilty and unscrupulousness of the Sanhedrim, in their ready violation of all their own laws and usages, and of the political pretensions of their whole lives.

They met, this time, for the sake of secrecy, not in their chamber at the temple, but in the house of Caiaphas ; and there they laid their plans.

There were several very serious difficulties in their way. In the first place they had not the power to put any man to death. Three years previously, the Roman government had taken this privilege from the Sanhedrim : and, although, not long after the crucifixion, Stephen was stoned to death just outside of Jerusalem without authority from the governor, it was done by a sudden rush, and an irregular act of violence, not by formal vote of the Sanhedrim, although doubtless they were pleased with the act. In the case of so great a personage, and so beloved by the people, as the Messiah, any such deed could not be attempted ; especially at the Passover, when the governor himself was at Jerusalem.

In addition to this, " the whole criminal proceeding prescribed in the Pentateuch rests upon three principles, which may be thus expressed : publicity of the trial ; entire liberty of defence allowed to the accused, and a guaranty against the dangers of testimony. One witness was not sufficient."* The Hebrew lawyers, in

relation to cases where life was at stake, maintained that, "A tribunal which condemns to death once in seven years may be called sanguinary." "It deserves this appellation," said Dr. Eliezur, "when it pronounces like sentence in seventy years:"* moreover, according to the Talmudists, it was not lawful to try causes of a capital nature in the night, and it was equally unlawful to examine a cause, pass sentence and put it in execution the same day. The last was very strenuously insisted on.† The proper and constant time for the sitting of the Sanhedrim was from the end of the morning service to the beginning of the evening service; sometimes the sessions were prolonged till night, and then they might determine what they had been deliberating by day: but they might not begin any new business by night.‡

The forms of trial, also, allowed to the accused every opportunity for defence; and placed the greatest restrictions upon judges against haste in action: Says an eminent French advocate who has written on this subject:

"On the day of trial, the executive officer of justice caused the accused person to make his appearance. At the feet of the elders were placed men who, under the name of *auditors* or *candidates*, followed regularly the sittings of the council. The papers in the case were read, and the witnesses called in succession. The President addressed this exhortation to each of them: 'It is not conjectures, or whatever public rumor has brought to thee, that we ask of thee: that we are not occupied by an affair, like a case of

* Olshausen.

† Jahn's Arch.

‡ Lightfoot—*Courts of the Temple*:

pecuniary interest, in which the injury may be repaired. If thou causest the condemnation of a person unjustly accused, his blood, and the blood of all the posterity of him, of whom thou wilt have deprived the earth, will fall upon thee : God will demand of thee an account, as he demanded of Cain an account of the blood of Abel. Speak.' * * * The witnesses were to attest to the identity of the party, and to depose to the month, day, hour and circumstances of the crime. After an examination of the proofs, those judges who believed the party innocent stated their reasons : those who believed him guilty spoke afterwards, and *with the greatest moderation*. If one of the *auditors* or *candidites* was entrusted by the accused with his defence ; or if he wished, in his own name, to present any elucidations in favor of innocence, he was admitted to the seat, from which he addressed the judges and the people. But this liberty was not granted to him if his opinion was in favor of condemning. Lastly ; when the accused person himself wished to speak, they gave most profound attention. When the discussion was finished, one of the judges recapitulated the case. They removed all the spectators ; two scribes took down the votes of the judges ; one of them noted those that were in favor of the accused, and the other those who condemned him. Eleven votes out of twenty-three were sufficient to acquit ; but it required thirteen to convict. * * If a majority of the votes acquitted, the accused was discharged *instantly* ; if he was to be punished, the judges postponed pronouncing sentence till the third day : during the intermediate day, they could not be occupied with anything but the cause ; and

they abstained from eating freely, and from wine, liquors, and everything which might render their minds less capable of reflection.

“On the morning of the third day they returned to the judgment-seat. Each judge who had not changed his opinion said, *I continue of the same opinion and condemn*. Any one who at first condemned might at this sitting acquit; but he who had once acquitted was not allowed to condemn. If a majority condemned, two magistrates immediately accompanied the condemned person to the place of punishment. The Elders did not descend from their seats; they placed at the entrance of the judgment-hall an officer of justice, with a small flag in his hand; a second officer, on horseback, followed the prisoner, and constantly kept looking back to the place of departure. During this interval, if any person came to announce to the Elders any new evidence favorable to the prisoner, the first officer waved his flag, and the second one, as soon as he perceived it, brought back the prisoner. If the prisoner declared to the *magistrates* that he recollected some reasons which had escaped him, they brought him before the *judges* no less than five times. If no incident occurred, the procession advanced slowly, preceded by a herald, who, in a loud voice, addressed the people thus: ‘This man (stating his name and surname) is led to punishment for such a crime; the witnesses who have sworn against him are such and such persons: if any one has evidence to give in his favor, let him come forth quickly.’”*

* “Trial of Jesus,” by Dupin, Advocate and Doctor of Laws.
Translated from the French by J. Pickering, LL.D.

Such were the restrictions which the chief priests and scribes and elders—chiefly Pharisees—felt upon themselves in their deliberations “to take Jesus by subtilty and kill him ;” but they had now determined, in order to accomplish their purpose, to disregard all restrictions of usages and law. If they could seize him by night,—well into the night,—when the multitudes would be asleep, they might avoid an uproar among the people : if they could, by a night conclave, establish charges against him and condemn him, he would then, when the people would awake in the morning, be in an attitude of an already convicted criminal ; and the multitudes would be stupefied, or at least kept in a state of wonder, and thus in check : moreover, if they could condemn him on a charge of blasphemy, the most hideous of all charges in the eyes of the Jewish nation, the people not knowing how the trial had been conducted, but only of the condemnation under it, might be led, by a sudden revulsion of feeling, from favor to the opposite extreme of hatred, and might join in the condemnation themselves. The rulers might also work on the intense popular feeling of pride in their temple, by charging him with a wish to destroy that temple ; and could enter this also in their condemnation. Then there would be but another step to be taken ; and the way for that would now be prepared. The Sanhedrim could not order an execution ; but, they might, on the charge of treason against the Roman government, induce the governor to give such an order : and this ruler was now in Jerusalem, ready to their hand. His residence was at Cæsarea ; but he was always in this city on the great festivals, for the double purpose of

guarding against insurrections, and of holding court for the trial of great criminals ; the inferior one being left to the Jewish elders themselves. The Sanhedrim wanted, in this case, to have a punishment inflicted that would not only gratify their revenge, but would stamp the sufferer with infamy, and annihilate respect and hope in his adherents ; and this could be brought about most readily by charging Christ with attempting to put down the Roman authority, and to elevate himself, as king, instead ; a crime sure to bring on him the severest punishment that the Roman power could inflict. If the governor would not listen to this charge, they might then take one step further, and one pretty sure to be successful, by insinuating that charges against his own loyalty could be sent on to Rome, and be laid at the feet of Tiberias, whose keen jealousy and unscrupulous despotism were fully known to all.

Such was clearly their arranged plan : for it is evident that, through the whole trial, they proceeded according to a settled scheme of action ; and the suborned witnesses, previously prepared, knew, when brought forward, exactly what to say.

The meetings of the Sanhedrim were properly in their own room by the temple ; but in cases of emergency, they might be held in the palace of the high priest ; and this was to be now their place of consultation, as there it would have less publicity than up in the temple courts.

We have seen on a former occasion the kind of men, of which their law required the Sanhedrim to be composed. The high priest was president ; and in order that the reader may have some knowledge of

the High Priests and their title to respectability in the Jewish nation, the subjoined list from Lightfoot is furnished, beginning with the 23d from the Babylonish captivity ; we will remember here what the Jewish writer, Jost, says on a former page, " that a priesthood, which the king [Herod] conferred on whom he pleased, and of whose incumbents he had killed two and deposed four, &c., could by no means satisfy the requisitions of God's government, and of the Judaism resulting from it.—The list is as follows :—

23. Hyrcanus ; his mother, Alexandra, an ambitious woman and the equally ambitious Pharisees, rule the nation.
24. Aristobulus, younger brother of Hyrcanus, after the death of their mother, makes war upon his brother, drives him from his kingdom to a private life, and takes both his priesthood and his kingdom to himself. They both desire he'p from the Romans, Scaurus and Pompey : Aristobulus, provoking Pompey, causes the sacking of Jerusalem and the subjugation of the Jews to the Roman yoke, from under which they were never relieved. Pompey restores the high-priesthood to Hyrcanus and carries Aristobulus and his son Antigonus to Rome.
25. Alexander, son of Aristobulus, escaping from Pompey on the way to Rome, is made high-priest ; tries to subvert the government, and his effort is twice suppressed by the Roman Gabinus.
26. Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, escapes from Rome, and gets the high-priesthood. Hyrcanus (23d high-priest,) delivered into his hands by the Parthians, kneels before Antigonus, who bites off his uncle's ears, so that the latter might no longer aspire to the high-priesthood.* Antigonus is taken by Antony, whipped, crucified, and decapitated.
27. Ananelus, an inferior priest, sent for out of Babylon, is made high-priest by Herod. Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus,

* Jos. Bel. 1, 13, § 9.

- nus, combining with Mariam, Herod's wife, had him deposed, and caused him to be succeeded by
28. Aristobulus, fifteen years of age, of rare beauty. After one year's enjoyment of it, he is drowned by Herod's order, and Ananelus (No. 27) is restored.
 29. Jesus son of Ferans. Herod deposes him.
 30. Simon son of Boethus. Herod married his daughter, and made him high-priest.
 31. Matthias, son of Theophilus. Deposed by Herod.
 32. Jozarus, son of Simon (No. 30.) Herod deposes him.
 33. Eleazur; made high-priest by Archelaus.
 34. Jesus, son of Sie; gets Eleazur removed, and has his place.
 35. Jozarus (No. 32) again. Was high-priest at the birth of Christ. Removed.
 36. Ananus; made high-priest by Cyrenius. Removed.
 37. Ismael; appointed by Valerius Gratus, governor of Judea. Removed by Gratus at the end of one year.*
 38. Eleazur, son of Ananus; appointed by Gratus; held it one year; removed by the same.
 39. Simon; appointed by Gratus; held it one year.
 40. Caiaphas, also called Josephus. He was Gratus' creature also.

These four changes were made by Gratus in eleven years. Annas, or Ananus, who had been high-priest, four changes before him, is said to be high-priest with him, (Luke iii, 2.) Caiaphas was [afterwards] removed by Vitellius.†

We may thus form an idea of the tribunal plotting the death of the Messiah by subtilty, and before which he was to appear for judgment—a body of seventy men, almost entirely Pharisees—chiefly such characters as he had delineated in his temple address; some believing on him, but too timid to acknowledge their belief; at their head a high-priest, at a time when that office was given or taken away at the caprice of the Roman governor, and was little respect-

* Jos. Ant. xviii, 2, § 2.

† Lightfoot.

ed ; the Sanhedrim, sufficiently full of hate itself, and stimulated still more by the other Scribes and Pharisees. The recklessness with which this body trod under foot all former laws and usages and went forward to the end, shows the strength of the venom in their hearts.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.—JUDAS.

THE means which the Sanhedrim desired for effecting their purposes were speedily found.—There was a traitor among the disciples themselves.

Events have just been multiplying so fast, that an effort will be necessary, in order to keep them clearly in our minds. We observe that

The 9th of the Jewish month, Nisan, corresponding to our *Saturday*, (the Jewish Sabbath,) the Messiah spent at Jericho.

10th, *Sunday*.—He came to Bethany.

11th, *Monday*.—His public entry into Jerusalem ; returns for the night to Bethany.

12th, *Tuesday*.—Comes again to Jericho. Cleanses the temple ; teaches ; returns to Bethany.

13th, *Wednesday*.—Again in Jerusalem ; discourses in the temple. The woes denounced. The Sanhedrim have their consultation and form their plans.

On the evening of this last day, after those denun-

ciations in the temple, and the quiet scene on Olivet where the disciples, in the anticipation of common danger, drew nearer in heart to their Master than ever before, he and they had proceeded to Bethany, where they were now entertained at supper in the house of Simon the leper, Lazarus being one of the guests at the feast.* Among the Jews, a slight dinner, chiefly of fruits, milk, cheese, &c., was eaten at eleven o'clock of our time, their principal meal being at six or seven in the evening. Their feasts were always at this latter time. Hands were washed before eating, and the feet of the guests or travellers also sometimes, by servants; or, where particular honor was intended, by members of the family,† as indeed is done at the present day.

The time was one when all the tender sensibilities of Christ's friends were deeply aroused; for there was, in all of them, a sense of some impending danger to him—probably some fearful calamity; his own words, the known fierce and cunning wrath of his enemies, and the scenes of the day, all showing that a crisis must be drawing nigh. Those woes hurled so thickly on the rulers, every person knew would not be forgotten: they had never been so reprobated, exposed, and, in effect, defied, before; and all this, now, by one individual, without resources in governmental help or powerful friends. Only a miracle could save him; and that exercise of power, although within his reach, he had intimated he would not ex-

* Matt. xxvi, 6; John xii, 2.

† See 1 Saml. xxv, 41; Gen. xviii, 4, and xix, 2; also "Robinson's Researches," Vol. iii, p. 25, describing the manner in which the feet of his party were washed at Ramleh.

ert. He had said that he would submit, and had declared that his death, by violence, was near : and the prophet long before had said, that he should be "led as a sheep to the slaughter," that "the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him," that "with his stripes we should be healed," and that the Lord had "laid on him the iniquity of us all.*" He himself knew that it would be his last supper at Bethany among these friends ; for his hour would now soon come.

While they were at this meal, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, came in, and opening a vessel of very costly perfume, she poured some of it on his head,† and with it also washed his feet, after which she wiped them with the hair of her head ; the scent of the opobalsam filling all the house.‡ There was a secret indignation among some of the disciples at this waste, when they thought how the money might have been spent among the poor ; but the Messiah said, "Let her alone : the poor ye have always with you ; but me ye have not always : she hath done what she could, and is come to anoint my body to the burying."§

Judas spake out in his thoughts, "Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence|| (equal to \$45 of our money) and given to the poor ;" not that he felt uncommon sympathy for the poor, but "because he was a thief and had the bag and bore what was put therein."¶

What momentous events seem, at times, to hang on

* Is. liii, 5, 6. † Matt. xxvi, 7. ‡ John xii, 3. § Mark xiv, 4-8.

|| A penny or Denarius was a day's wages for a laboring man : See Matt. xx, 2.

¶ John xii, 4-6.

little things :—seem so to us ; but, in the inscrutable counsels of God, where, and where only, his purposes and our free agency can be reconciled, they do not seem so to depend ; all being fore-known to him.—From this time Judas was a traitor, the worst that the world has ever known.

When he was first selected to be among the twelve, he was probably a man, in character and disposition, much like the others, but of financial capabilities better than theirs. They were all dark in mind and self-seeking : but still with varieties of dispositions and intellect, which, in their peculiar position, became every day more developed and marked. Christ exerted no miraculous power over their wills, but left their affections and wills free to act ; exerting influence by his own great example and teachings before them ;—still leaving them to choose. With Christ himself before him, day by day, for about three years, Judas still chose the wrong. What a wonderful history his would be, if we knew it ;—those transitions from bad to worse and still worse, in his heart ; the struggles there,—for there were doubtless such, early in his case ; the admiration for Christ gradually lessened by base passion rising in him, and taking its place : the affection always weak perhaps, but sometimes lighted up to greater strength, then flickering and dying away, and, at last, dead : and then all the soul's life in him, dead.

Doubtless, Judas tried, in his own mind, to justify himself ;—as what man like him does not ?—and probably with a result half satisfactory to himself. He might try to consider himself an injured man, led on, for three years, with expectations of great final tri-

umph and reward ; but thwarted just at the very time when the reward seemed to be within reach. On Monday, the multitudes had saluted his Master in terms of reverence and worship. Once before they had endeavored to put him in the seat of royalty, but he had withdrawn himself from them ; now the outburst of enthusiasm had broken through every restraint, and the shouts of their hosannas had rung over Jerusalem and through the temple cloisters. How easy would it have been for Jesus, sustained by his miraculous powers, to have made himself the mighty earthly ruler so long expected and hoped for ; and to have aggrandized and made glorious the whole Jewish nation ! And in refusing this, (the traitor might argue) he had done a wrong to all the Jewish people ; and especially to Judas, who might, in that new kingdom, have grown so wealthy. Worse than that, he had offended all the rulers, and insulted them (still, Judas arguing) with woes heaped on them, and insulted the nation by declaring that God was withdrawing his favor from it, soon to give it to another people.—So all hopes of aggrandizement and wealth from this source had perished from the mind of Judas, who had hoped to be treasurer in that great earthly kingdom which all were expecting to see established.

One other bitter ingredient had just been put into that cup, where every drop seemed to him now to be turning into gall. It was when the Messiah, on their way from Jerusalem, had told his disciples that they should be, everywhere, persecuted, betrayed by father and brother ; should be hated, and some of them put to death. He had spoken of the Comforter that should be with them, and of their inward peace, and

their final rewards in heaven ; but an avaricious man could see nothing in all this, except the suffering, and the persecution, and the losses ; no requital to a heart like his.

Here now, at the supper, when his indignation about the waste broke out, he was met with a reproof—gentle in its tone and very mild, but, in his state of feeling, all the more provoking to him from its very mildness. It showed such a want of an appreciation of money and of him, the treasurer : he felt also now, from Christ's insight into his character, that his hypocrisy was to him unmasked, his motive known, and his thieving revealed.

So Satan entered into him now,* unresisted, and had the full possession.

One thought more ; and that was quickly supplied by the Tempter. If Christ must die, why then might not he, Judas, *have a pecuniary benefit from the event ?*

The love of money is declared in Scripture to be the root of *all* evil ; and on the very next day, Judas went to the Jewish rulers to bargain for betraying his Master, with whom he could still remain, and of whose movements he could inform them, and also the most fitting time for their purposes. All was soon agreed upon. He asked them, “ What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you ? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver,”—the price of a slave according to the old Jewish law.†

* Luke xxii, 3.

† Exodus xxi, 32. If this money was in shekels, 30 pieces would amount to \$15 05 of our money ; if the Roman *stater*, to \$22 50.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PASSOVER FEAST.

A GREAT festival, commemorative of the most remarkable event in the Jewish history, had come down to them from the day when they first properly began to be a nation. Their forefathers had been slaves in Egypt. One night, after a series of miracles designed to set them free, but resisted by the Egyptian monarch, a visitation the most appalling possible to their bondmasters was to effect their deliverance. The first-born in every family was to be, that night, slain by a divine judgment, throughout that whole country; the houses of the Israelites alone being excepted. It was a momentous time: on the one side, seemingly their last hope of deliverance from slavery: on the other, a universal cry of anguish; wailing for the Egyptian dead over all the land; and those dead the favored ones—the first-born—in every house. In the morning the Jews were sent off: deliverance had come.

The Feast of the Passover, in commemoration of this, brought to Jerusalem the whole Jewish people from their own region, and from distant lands. This immense assemblage had, on their arrival, to divide themselves into companies of not less than ten or more than twenty,* and each company had to prepare a lamb, or, if no lamb could be found, a kid, to be eaten on this occasion. It was to be a male of that year, without blemish, and was to be brought, on the day be-

* Tholuck.

fore the commencement of the festival, to the great altar at the temple, and killed there between the hours of three and six in the afternoon. This was to be on the 14th of the month Abib, (afterwards called Nisan,) the first month of their sacred year. The blood was sprinkled at the foot of the altar, the fat taken out and thrown into the fire on the altar, the body carried home for the supper and roasted whole, the skin given to the owner of the house. All houses in Jerusalem were, on this occasion, open indiscriminately to the public, and might be used by common right, during the feast. The flesh not eaten at the supper was to be burned, together with the bones. There was also other meat, called the peace-offering, placed on the table, to take off the edge of their appetites, so that they might not go voraciously to the Paschal lamb: also in case it might not be sufficient for a large company.

At or before noon of the 14th, all leaven was to be carefully removed from the houses; and during eight days, they were to eat only unleavened bread, in commemoration of the haste with which their ancestors had left their place of bondage. Bitter herbs* were also to be provided for this Paschal supper; and they had also a sauce, called *charoseth*, composed of things sweet and bitter, pounded together in memory of the clay in which their forefathers labored when making bricks in the land of Egypt.

After sunset, (now the beginning of the 15th, by the Jewish reckoning, their day beginning at sunset,) the company assembled and took their places around the table, reclining on couches, (the posture of freemen,) to show that they had got out of servitude into free-

* Ex. xii, 8.

dom. On other occasions, the Jews might choose their posture ; and they often sat at table, but at the Paschal supper their rules prescribed that "a man is bound to eat and to drink and to sit in a posture of freedom," that is to recline.

That was the usual posture among the Greeks and Romans at their feasts. They leaned on the left arm, a cushion or bolster under the shoulder assisting to ease the posture ; and if there were several at table, the chief person occupied the middle place, the others in front or back of him, or similarly arranged at other tables placed at rectangles with this. As they reclined slantingly to the table, so as to bring each man's head in front of the chest of the one next behind him, if the former wished to speak to the latter, especially if it was anything secret, he leaned his head back on the bosom of the other (*in sinu recumbere* Plin. Epist. iv, 22.) The Gemara says of the Persians that, "when they could not discourse because of their way of leaning at meals, they talked by signs either with their hands or upon their fingers : " and the Jews had probably adopted the same custom during their ancient captivity in Persia.

On the morning of the 14th of Nisan (our Thursday) the Messiah sent two disciples, Peter and John, from Bethany to Jerusalem, to prepare for the Passover supper : in the evening he and the remainder of them followed to that city. We may easily imagine the traitor, in this, to him, uncongenial, but for the present necessary, companionship ; for he was watching for the best time and place in which to execute his contract with the Sanhedrim. He had, that day, bargained with them : had returned and joined the

party of the disciples ; and was now accompanying them to unite in the Paschal supper. What a thoroughly-depraved wretch he must have felt himself to be, in spite of every effort of justification in his own mind ! We can imagine him, sometimes afraid to look his Master or companions in the face ; sometimes trying to be brazen and composed, but failing continually in the effort ; sometimes shrinking away and wishing to be apart from the company ; and again mixing with them, in order to prevent suspicion, and because he hated being alone with his own thoughts. We can see his eye cowering before the looks of others ; or assuming an impudent, or affectedly-composed, or defiant expression ; sometimes startled by words from them innocent of any particular meaning, but yet, in his convictions, seeming to be pointed at him ; often wondering whether his own changed tones of voice, or his unaccounted-for absence, or his manner, might not have betrayed him. He followed on, thus, over Olivet, and into the city ; feeling, as he entered it, that he was bound by a hellish compact with the rulers there ; and that men, so determined in malice as they had showed themselves to be, held him now in their power, in a kind of triumph, through his weakness and baseness. He had seen that triumph in their gladness and the glistening of their eyes that day, as the compact was made ; and he knew that they despised him, while they were thankful and glad. Of his Master, and of that long-continued kindness to him, and gentleness, and Divine goodness, he dared not think at all, to-day ; for every such thought was a dagger, and made him shrink with pain.

They proceeded to the room selected for this meal, and soon afterwards took their places at the table; John being in front of the Messiah, as they reclined on their couches. But, alas! even in this time of deep distress, when, as they had been informed, the hour of agony and death was close at hand, the old feeling of ambition and strife revived.* Perhaps it was on the question, who should have the second place of honor at the table, which was always the one just in front of the Master; perhaps it had originated from some other matter even more discreditable than that; but the Saviour,—how merciful, how gentle, how God-like in this mercy and gentleness!—said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as one that serveth,”† &c. So, in order to impress his injunction, he arose from table and, laying aside his upper garment, took a basin and towel, and entered on a very menial office, that of washing their feet. By the usages of that country, this was never done by a superior to an inferior; and when he came to Peter, that impetuous disciple drew back:

“Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” and declared that it should never be done.

“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me,”

* Luke xxii, 24.

† Ib. 25-27.

was the reply ; and the startled disciple cried out :

“ Lord, not my feet only, but also by hands and my head.”*

Judas was amongst them, and Christ, doubtless, washed his feet also. How the conscious traitor must have shrunk at his touch !

The company, however, was not long troubled with the presence of this man. Soon after their reclining at table, the rest of the disciples, for the first time, became aware that there was such a traitor among them. The Saviour said :

“ Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.”

A shudder must have gone through them, with a deep gloom on the heart ; and there must have been a quivering of the lip, as they all asked,

“ Lord, is it I ?”

No consciousness among the eleven, but a query by each whether he was suspected, and a wish, by the expected answer, to stand acquitted before the company. They turned upon each other inquisitive and doubting glances ;—those men who had been with him so long, so attached, erring often, always dark in apprehensions, grieving him by their mistakes ;—but traitor ! who was the miscreant ? Their glances went around the table ; their feelings were warm with indignation ; they were ready to shrink from each other—after all this fellowship, and these pleasant communings, a traitor ! Who was he ? Peter

* John xiii. 6-9. “ Among the duties required from a wife towards her husband, there was one, that she should wash his face, his hands, and his feet. This was expected by a father from his son ; the same from a servant towards his master.”—*Lightfoot.*

could bear it no longer ; but gave John a secret sign to question further ; and this disciple, leaning back so as to bring his head on the Saviour's breast, asked, in a whisper, who it was. The answer was a certain signal by which John could know and could communicate to Peter who was the individual.* To Judas he said :

"What thou doest, do quickly ;" an expression enigmatical to the rest ; but the traitor, excited and thrown off his guard, asked,

"Master, is it I ?" The answer was,

"Thou hast said,"† equivalent to, "It is you." He left the room, unmasked, a fugitive from their company and from his Lord,—lost.

One of the disciples gone : and he a traitor !

There was a vacant place at the table. What of the rest ? A gloomy feeling fell on the company such as there always is from a desertion. A vacancy sometimes has about it remembrances of worth and nobleness : but there was none in the present case. Baseness, hypocrisy, treachery was the remembrance that Judas left behind ; and there was no wickedness that now they might not expect from him, directed probably against themselves. Contempt for his conduct could scarcely buoy them up ; for he had been one of them, and they felt that the baseness had been directly from among their own company. They were prostrated in spirit by the discovery, felt disgraced, dishonored by the recent companionship :—what suspicions might not the Master have now about them ? They looked towards the vacant place, with a deep sinking in their hearts ; towards the Master, so long

* John xiii, 23-28.

† Matt. xxvi, 25.

the beloved, the admired, the venerated, in their inmost soul.—His face was very sad. Could he doubt *them*? Nay, why might he not doubt them now? Eyes were turned again upon him, trying to read in his face expressions of confidence and trust in them. He spoke, by and by; and the words were even more dark and gloomy than their gloomy thoughts. "*All ye shall be offended because of me this night* : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered abroad."—Even on the back of this assertion there was no censure on them, but simply the promise, "But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee."* Indeed, there was almost too much prostration of feeling among the company generally, for any sentiment except sadness; yet, even then, hope was given to them. But Peter spake up: for his heart recoiled at the thought of the general desertion, and he knew not yet how weak he himself was. His voice was confident. "Though all should be offended of thee yet will I not be offended." And he looked for an approval of his bravery. It came not, but the answer, "Verily I say unto thee that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."† The tones of the Saviour's voice must have been even sadder than the words; and both drew from Peter, with still greater vehemence, the assertion, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." And the others said the same.‡ They had been roused up by Peter's vehemence; their feelings rallied around their Lord, and they broke through the gloom consequent on Judas' desertion to

* Mark xiv, 30, 31.

† Matt. xxvi, 31, 32.

‡ Ib. 32-35.

make bold protestations of their fidelity. It was not kept.

The whole procedure at this meal was specially prescribed ; and, according to the account of the Talmud it was as follows :

1. The guests being placed around the table, they mingled a cup of wine with water, over which the master of the family (or if two or more families were united, a person deputed for the purpose) gave thanks and drank it off. The thanksgiving for the wine was to this effect ; " Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine ;" and for the day as follows ; " Blessed be thou for this good day, and for this holy convocation, which thou hast given us for joy and rejoicing. : Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified Israel and the times."

2. They then washed their hands ; after which the table was furnished with the Paschal lamb roasted whole, with bitter herbs, and with two cakes of unleavened bread, together with the flesh of the peace-offering, and the *charoseth* or thick sauce above mentioned.

3. The officiator, or person presiding, then took a small piece of the salad ; and, having blessed God for creating the fruit of the ground, he ate it, the other guests following his example ; after which all the dishes were removed from the table, that the children might inquire and be instructed in the nature of the feast. (Ex. xii, 25, 26.) The text on which they generally discoursed was Deut. xxvi, 5-11.

4. Then replacing the supper, they explained the import of the bitter herbs and Paschal lamb ; and,

over a second cup of wine, repeated cxiii and cxiv Psalms with an eucharistic prayer.

5. The hands were again washed, accompanied by an ejaculatory prayer ; after which the master of the house proceeded to break and bless a cake of the unleavened bread, half of which he distributed among the guests, reserving half beneath a napkin, if necessary for the *aphicomas*, or last morsel ; for the rule was to conclude with eating a small piece of the Paschal lamb.

6. They then ate the rest of the cake with the bitter herbs, dipping the bread in the charoseth or sauce.

7. Next they ate the flesh of the peace offering ; and, then, the flesh of the Paschal lamb ; which was followed by returning thanks to God, and a second washing of the hands.

8. A third cup of wine was then filled, over which they blessed God, or said grace after meat, (whence it was called the cup of blessing,*) and the wine was drank.

9. Lastly ; a fourth cup of wine was filled, called the cup of the Hallel : over that they completed the supper, either by singing or reciting the great Hallel, a hymn of praise consisting of Psalms cxv to cxviii inclusive, and also with a prayer.†

If the Messiah followed this order, it was doubtless in the fifth and eight parts of it that the eucharistic feast of the Christian church was instituted : " Take, eat, this is *my body*, which is given for you : this do

* See 1 Cor. x, 16.

† Horne's " Introduction," originally from Lightfoot.

in remembrance of me :” “ This cup is the new testament in *my blood*, which is shed for you.”

“ My blood of the *new covenant* ;” for that is, here, the meaning of the word. A covenant is an agreement between two individuals, to do, or to forbear, some act or thing ; *a contract* : and it was here a contract by the Messiah to be sealed with his own life-blood.

There was once, long before this time, a scene of great solemnity, at the foot of Sinai, just after God had given to Moses, on the top of that mountain, the written covenant : and that scene was, when that covenant was ratified by the people of Israel, with the shedding of the blood of victims,—burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to God. There had just been the most imposing event that our world has ever witnessed : for, on Sinai, there were “ thunders and lightnings, and a thick black cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet sounding loud ; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God : and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire : and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. * * * And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”*

* Exodus xix. 10-18: xx, 18, 19.]

Their leader had now come down from the mountain top, and from the cloud shrouding that Majesty which no mortal might see clearly and live ; and he told the people " all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments : and all the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." He wrote down the words ; and built an altar, and erected twelve pillars to represent the tribes. Then, on this altar, they offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins ; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the *book of the covenant*, and read it in the audience of the people ; and they said?

" All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."

" And Moses took the blood, and *sprinkled it on the people*, and said, *Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.*"*

It was a grand, and most solemn and imposing spectacle. How different from it, in all the outward seeming, was this spectacle in the private room at Jerusalem, where Christ, who had just before laid aside his upper garments to wash his disciples' feet, now brake the bread to them, and gave them the cup to drink. But there was a moral grandeur in this simple scene, which no cloud enveloping a mountain, and thunder and lightning there, could ever reach. for he said, respecting this new covenant, " This cup is the new covenant in *my* blood, which is shed for

* Exodus xxiv, 8-8.

you.”* *His own* blood it was which was to be sprinkled on all nations ; he the sacrifice for all the world !

The Israelites moved off from Sinai, awed and frightened by the earthquakes and the signs on the mountain's brow ; and they said to Moses, “Speak thou with us and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die ;” but the words of Christ draw us towards him, and towards heaven, through the fullness of love to all men which they display.

Having finished the Passover meal, they sang their hymn : and then, before leaving the room, there was an address from the Messiah to his disciples, and afterwards a prayer, to both of which angels might well have been listeners ; for the words seem to blend together both heaven and earth. They were the last of the teachings of the greatest Teacher earth has known, or will ever know.

We perceive, in these words, shades of thought never seen but in the truest and deepest affection, which always has promptings of its own peculiar kind. “In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself ; that where I am there ye may be also.” That was a most tender as well as true regard, which, when he should get into possession of the kingdom in heaven, would not be contented till it had brought him to take them up to himself.—Yet they were frail men, full of darkness and errors.

HOW TENDER AND BEAUTIFUL IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST !

He had now almost completed his mission on the earth. He had been our Example and our Teacher : one act remained,—*to die for us*. The cross was to be raised up before all the world as evidence of God's hatred of sin, and of the unyielding nature of his law against unrighteousness ;—Christ there, the expiation, the voluntary sacrifice offered for all mankind. "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."* He had often looked forward to this event with shudderings of his human nature at its horrors ; yet he turned not aside, but said, "For this cause came I unto this hour." The hour was now close at hand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

GETHSEMANE.

THE traitor, in the meanwhile, was busy in his work.

He knew the habits and resorts of the Messiah ; and was forwarding preparations for the seizure, which the Sanhedrim intended to make this night. Their plans were laid : they had now a ready instrument for the first act, bought with their gold. A company was formed, subordinates of the Sanhedrim

* John iii, 14, 15.

and temple,* armed and sufficient in number to bear down opposition : but, strong as it was, the chief priests and captains and elders also attended,† to see that their work was surely done. The traitor had given, as a signal, the act of kindest friendship in salutation, " Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he ; hold him fast."‡

Silently their preparations were made ; the traitor sometimes looking to see that the company was sufficiently large and of the right spirit ; sometimes sending his thoughts back to that supper-table, the agitating question put around, " Is it I ?" and the sadness on the Saviour's face in that scene ; and most of all to the words respecting himself by Christ, " It had been good for that man if he had not been born :"§ and sometimes, perhaps, he queried, whether Christ would not, when this party should appear, disperse, or overawe them by his miraculous powers ; or pass unharmed from among them, as he had often done before. Perhaps Judas expected this last : still, as to himself, he had the money in his pocket, his reward secured.

Thus they were prepared, and awaiting in Jerusalem the order to move.

It was the time of the full moon ; and a mellow light was shed on the streets of the city and the hills about it, as the Messiah and his disciples left their supper-room, and passing the eastern gate, descended the slope leading down towards the Kedron. They went along in sadness ; their minds filled with the solemn events at that Passover meal, and with the

* Mark xiv, 43.

† Luke xxii, 52.

‡ Matt. xxvi, 48.

§ Matt. xxvi, 24.

sense of the fierce trials close at hand ; and as they met, or passed, company after company on the way, the festive gladness of the latter came jarring on their hearts. How easily could a few words from the Messiah, then, have aroused all those multitudes,—more than two millions—in and about the city, and have made them the quick executors of his will and power : for the general enthusiasm towards him needed but a spark to make it, to all opposers, a consuming flame ; and his miraculous powers could also have called even angels down, if need should be. But he passed on in silence : he did not desire observation, but retirement and a few hours for prayer : and he would then be ready for the self-sacrifice which was to drain his life-blood. His hour had come : and the deed he knew, was necessary for the redemption of our race.

But still the trial to his human nature would be horrible ; and he felt it already with a shrinking and a quivering through all his frame ; the death-convulsions foreshadowing themselves during the silent anticipations of that night.

We cannot understand the mysteries of the divine and human natures in Christ. All we know is that the human nature was such as ours, with all its capacity for suffering pain ; and that, having lived our life here, God knows, from his own sufferings, to pity man :—also, that the Divinity was there with its greatness and power ; and doubtless, too, with such a keenness in all the intellectual and emotional sensations in this suffering, as our minds can never comprehend, and our hearts can never know. It was so in all the life of Christ ; his intellect, his emotions, not ours but

ours *sublimed* and passing off into those of the God, though still having their home here on earth. How far all this might work concentrated horrors—infinite in extent,—into these few hours of time at Gethsemane, and into these anticipations, and into the sufferings when they really came, who can tell? “The spirit of a man may bear his infirmities, but a *wounded spirit*, who can bear it?” If so with man, how was it with Christ!

Across the valley of Jehoshaphat, and somewhere on the slopes of Olivet, was a garden, Gethsemane* by name, which he had been in the habit of frequenting with his disciples;† and to this place they now ascended; the hushed noises of the city, and of the multitudes who were fast sinking into repose, scarcely reaching that retired spot. The Messiah felt the need of prayer—of communion with the Father, and of strengthening for the coming hours, in which his human nature would be so fearfully tried. Having reached Gethsemane, he said to the disciples, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation;” and then taking Peter, and James, and John, he went with them further into the garden apart from the rest. Here, also, he left these three, saying, as he did so, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:” and he went then further, alone, for prayer. He fell on his face; and it was a time of agony such as no human thought can ever reach. We know it dimly from his words of prayer, “Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me;” “take away this cup from me;”‡ yet, with the addition, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou

* Meaning “place of olive presses.”

† John xviii, 2.

‡ Matt. xxvi, 89; Mark xiv, 86.

wilt." The fearfulness of the struggle in him is only shadowed to us ; for the reality cannot be reached by words. "Sorrowful, *even unto death*," and that in Christ! in him who had come to suffer, and to redeem the world by suffering this death, and had predicted it frequently, and had advanced steadily towards it, but now involved in horror so great that, for a moment, it had the mastery. What must the agony in that prayer have been ; even the Divine nature borne down, as if dissolution were near ! What a depth of horror is dimly revealed to us ! But, "not as I will, but as thou wilt ;" and with those words the fierceness of that almost mortal anguish passed away.

The prayer was brief ; for such agony could not be endured by any human nature long ; and he came back to where the three disciples had been left. They were asleep. How different their quiet rest, their unconsciousness, the relaxed limbs and the breathing of their deep repose, from the agony that had just been almost crushing him, and which still made itself felt in all his system ! The night, also, so mellow and calm : the light of the full moon over the hushed landscape, and the soft music of the nightingales harmonizing with all else, made it a scene of perfect midnight repose ; but all this—the mellowness, the repose, the nightingales' song,—all jarring now terribly on a nature so horrified and just now so wildly tossed with agony,—almost so abandoned, seemingly, of heaven and earth.

He awoke the disciples with words of half reproach, but which, in his gentle nature, were qualified immediately with an apology for them : "What ! could ye not watch with me one hour ? Watch and pray that

ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

He left them a second time, retiring once more for prayer; and the convulsion of anguish again passed over him, but modified by an entire resignation to the will of God. “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” The horror that seemed as of a divinity perishing, “my soul sorrowful unto death,” must have been indeed frightful beyond any but infinite power to understand.

He came back again to the three disciples, and found them, as before, in a deep and quiet sleep; for it was late now, and “their eyes were heavy.” Again, in strong contrast to his own feelings, was that hush in all the scene; as if nature might be almost in mockery of its Master: the world in its perfectness of repose, appearing to have shut him out: to be closed against him abandoned in his agony: and yet it was to ransom its millions, and bring them to salvation, that he was about to suffer. He spoke to the disciples again; but they answered him confusedly and only half aroused: and he left them once more for his retirement and prayer. There was a strange restlessness in the Messiah that night; a part of the terrible nervous strain upon his system, and of the agitations of his internal being:—how different from his former long seasons of quiet communion with God on the mountains of Galilee. These were briefer, broken times of prayer; with an agitation that could not long admit of quiet, even in such communion. **FOR THE PRAYER ITSELF WAS A CONVULSION:** and, during this

* Matt. xxvi, 41.

third one, a sweat of blood broke out upon him, the bloody perspiration falling in great drops to the ground.* In that agony, which brought the blood thus oozing from his face and body, an angel came to his side, to sustain and comfort him.

Mortal man may never fathom the depth of that agony in Gethsemane.

He came a third time to his disciples ; and told them that the hour was now at hand.

This was, indeed, soon apparent, even to their half-aroused consciousness ; for torches and lanterns were now seen gleaming amid the garden-alleys on Olivet ; and voices, coming nearer, were heard ; and, very soon, the company in Gethsemane were all surrounded by a rude multitude armed with swords and staves. Judas came forward :

“ Hail, Master ! ” and he kissed him.

The others pressed around.

“ Whom seek ye ? ” the Messiah asked.

“ Jesus of Nazareth. ”

“ I am he, ” he said, and faced them calmly ; and, as he did so, the company shrunk down before him ; for there was a strange power in that Presence even there, although his greatest humiliations were begun. Urged on, however, by their leaders, the armed men

* Luke xxii, 44. Dr. Mead, from Galen, observes ; *Contingere interdum poros, ex multo aut fervido spiritu adeo dilatari, ut etiam exeat sanguis per eos, fiatque sudor sanguineus: It happens sometimes that, by great or deep mental agitation, the pores are so much dilated that blood issues from them, and there is a bloody sweat.* (Quoted from Clarke's Commentary.)—“ An interesting example of a sweat of blood, under circumstances of strong terror, accompanied by loss of speech, is given in an article by Dr. Schneider in Casper's *Wochenschrift* for 1848, and cited in the *Medical Gazette* for that year.”—*Alford.*

seized him, and a scene of confusion for a little while ensued. Peter made resistance, and a servant of the high priest was maimed ; but Christ healed the man, with a reproof to his follower for the act : " Put up thy sword ; the cup that my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it ? " * He said also to Peter, " Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be. " † He spoke further to the leaders, asking why they had come as against a thief with swords and staves ? He asked no favors of them for himself ; but for his disciples, that they might be allowed to depart uninjured. They proceeded immediately to bind him, ‡ and then led him away. The disciples fled. §

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HALL OF CAIAPHAS.

THE Pharisees and chief priests and rulers had, so far, succeeded. It was night ; and the millions at the passover, having eaten the paschal supper, were now asleep. A comparative quiet reigned in Jerusalem and through its suburbs and on Olivet, as the armed men, having the Messiah now bound in their charge, passed back into the city, and threaded its

* John xviii, 11.

† Matt. xxvi, 53, 54.

‡ John xviii, 8, 12.

§ Mark xiv, 50.

streets. They were conducted first to the house of Annas. This individual, called also Ananias, had been high priest himself, and was yet styled such as a token of respect : he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, at present in the high priesthood, and father also of Eleazar, late high priest ; and was, moreover, at this time, Sagan or prefect to the priests, an office of which there is frequent mention among the Rabbins.* His age and his former and present offices, gave his opinions weight ; and the proceedings of this night, all so irregular in their character, needed every extraneous aid that could be procured, in order to shield the perpetrators. For, in the morning, when the multitudes would wake up, and receive information of these acts during the night, there would be a great excitement, and many inquiries would be started tending to a tumult, against all which they desired to be able immediately to present the highest Jewish authority. Annas had no power as a judge : and any meeting at his house would be an informal one ; but it was important to be able to quote his opinion, in a decided manner, before the populace.

From his house they proceeded very soon to the palace of Caiaphas himself. The Sanhedrim, in the meantime, had been collecting there ; and the Messiah, still bound, was now in the presence of his judges, evidently met, not for trial, but for condemnation. The case had been already, in their minds, fully prejudged. This was not, however, a formal sitting of the Sanhedrim, for such, according to their laws, could not be held by night, and no trial could regu-

* Lightfoot, *in loco*.

larly be commenced at night ; and as these judges would, in the morning, be on trial themselves in the minds of the people, it was necessary to keep up the appearance of adhering to the forms of law. All the while, over the Sanhedrim hung the dread of the populace and of tumults, and of thus being foiled at last. They planned that, when their decision should come before the people it should come suddenly, and should be a decision adapted to stamp such black infamy upon the accused as would astound and stupefy the hearers, until the governor's quickly-added judgment should put the whole matter into the hands of the military, and not only defy resistance from the multitudes, but also save the Sanhedrim from the consequences of possible tumult by having made it a governmental affair. Therefore the object was to have now a secret examination, in order that all preparations might be made for a quick decision in the formal, regular meeting, which the Sanhedrim would afterwards have, at earliest dawn. Although it was so late at night, yet the public were excluded from the house of Caiaphas ; for Peter, following on, was passed in through the gates of entrance only at the request of John, who was known to the high priest, and who spoke to the woman doing the duty of porter ;*—that office being sometimes occupied in Judea by women.†

So now they were before each other, the Messiah standing bound, with guards on either side, the Sanhedrim sitting, gloating their eyes on him, whom they felt to be, at last, within their power, and were determined to make their victim.

* John xviii, 16.

† Lightfoot.

The eastern house described in a former chapter, was of the better kind ; but, in families of very great wealth, or consequence, the structures took yet larger proportions ; and such was, doubtless, the house of Caiaphas used on this occasion. These had an outer and inner gate at the archway leading from the street ; while also, at one side of their large court, and reached by a few steps of ascent, was a reception room open toward the court ; which room, being furnished with cushioned divans or platforms, adjoining the walls, was a luxurious resting-place, convenient also for business when there was occasion. The writer of this is describing from what he himself saw in Damascus ; and fashions in those countries seldom change. The walls around the court in such houses in Damascus are faced with variously colored stones, arranged in patterns, and are also ornamented with inscriptions from religious books, or from the maxims of the wise.

It is doubtless in such a hall, at the high-priest's palace, that this trial was held ; the court being filled with soldiers and attendants, and the gates closed against intruders. Torches were flaring from the walls or columns of the audience room, and a strong light fell upon the scene ;—upon the calm and noble countenance in the midst, on which all eyes were now fixed ; and upon the keen, wrathful faces around, now lit up by triumph, but still marked with lines of anxiety and fear. Did he see a friendly eye in all that crowd ? Scarcely ; but, if friends were there, they did not dare to speak.

And so the examination began : false, suborned witnesses there ; judges false to truth and right there ;

and, to the Messiah, the bitterest of all things there, a favored, honored disciple also false. But this last falseness was not yet shown.

The high-priest commenced with asking the Messiah about his disciples and his doctrines, hoping to find some admissions made, by which he might bring charges of a weighty character ; but there were none. There was a sublime dignity in the Saviour as he stood and answered. His case was clearly prejudged ; his judges were fixed in purpose ; and he knew it all : they were trying to entangle him by his admissions ; there were men there, also, ready for personal violence ; and he saw all of this. But he answered calmly, and with dignity : " I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogues and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing, why askest thou me ? Ask them that heard me, what I have said unto them : behold they know what I said." This challenge to a fair examination by witnesses was met by gross violence from one of the officers, who struck the Saviour with the palm of his hand, with the sharp question :— " Answerest thou the high-priest so ?" It was calmly borne. " If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if well, why smitest thou me."*

The Messiah had been asking for only what was customary in Jewish trials :—or rather, for less than that : for he asked but a candid examination of those who had listened to his teachings ; while it was customary in these trials to begin with the testimony for the accused, giving the witnesses a fair hearing, and encouraging them to speak for the defence. Instead

* John xviii, 19-23.

of that, the Sanhedrim now began with seeking for false witnesses against him : but they sought in vain. Many were offered, but their evidence was contradictory and none of it of a sufficiently damnatory kind.* At last came two, who declared that they had heard him say, " I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days ;"† and at their testimony the eyes of the judges glistened : for here was a charge that would work against him before all the people, holding, as they did, their temple in such reverence, and feeling such pride in its greatness. However, even in this charge the witnesses were not agreed. The Saviour did not reply to them.

At last, the high priest, wearied with the impotence of his efforts, so far, and out of patience, determined to force a crisis ; and to have a decided answer, in a matter that he believed would produce condemnation in the minds of all men, people as well as Sanhedrim : and to insure success, he commenced with their most solemn form of adjuration or oath.

" *I adjure thee by the living God,*" he said, " that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God :"[†] —a form of demand which put the adjured person under the curse of the law, unless he should make reply : the answer so returned being considered under oath, whose falsity was accounted perjury.§ The interest of the assembly was wrought up to the highest. Men leaned forward, and a deep silence fell upon that room. The Messiah had hitherto refused to answer the false and frivolous charges brought|| before judges so resolved to condemn : but he now replied to him,

* Matt. xxvi, 59-60.

§ Tholuck *in loco*.

† Ib. 61.

|| Matt. xxvi, 62.

‡ Ib. 62.

"Thou hast said," [a common form, meaning "yes, it is so :"] nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven."*

—It was enough. They had succeeded : and a wild scene of triumph, execration, rage and violence quickly ensued. The high priest rent his robes, crying out,

"He hath spoken blasphemies : what further need have we of witnesses ? Behold ye have heard his blasphemy : what think ye ?"

"He is guilty of death ;" was shouted from all parts of the hall : and they now rushed upon him, spit in his face, buffeted him, and striking him with the palms of their hands, asked, scornfully and tauntingly, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"† even the servants joined in these insults and taunts.‡

Greatness is never so great, as when calmly sustaining itself amid insults and injuries ; truth never so grand as when it stands unflinchingly, unmoved amid danger : and so the Messiah had stood throughout this trial,—so continued to the last. He had been sublime often in his powerful teachings, and in his omnipotence, when he stayed nature's laws, and bade all diseases relax their hold, and the dead to live ; but sublimer still he was in his mildness and forgiveness among all these his enemies, offering him insults and violence, and thirsting for his blood.

One thing must come out clearly to our minds in this matter ; and that is, the decisive manner in which he asserted his Godship here ; and in which he allowed them to act upon that his claim, to the last. The Sanhedrim were condemning him *on such a claim* ;

* Matt. xxvi, 64.

† Ib. 65-68.

‡ Mark xiv, 65.

there was no retracting or denying, on his part. They understood him clearly and fully, and charged him with blasphemy, in making himself God; and had pronounced him guilty of death for it. If he meant to assert no such title, it was easy to say so, and to disabuse their minds, and, at least, deprive them of all excuse in their meditated deed of death; but he put in not one word to that effect.

Indeed, through all his ministry, that claim had been his great offence in their eyes. They had been willing to acknowledge him as a prophet; but he had again and again, publicly and fully asserted for himself more than that, even the Godship and its authority and rights. A claim like that, and indeed any remote inclination to it, was, in the eye of the Jewish law, the most awful crime that could be committed,—indeed an unpardonable one. We have seen how Moses and Aaron were shut off by Jehovah himself from entering the Promised Land, simply for arrogating to themselves, in a momentary excitement, divine authority in performing a miracle; and so rigidly and severely was every sin of blasphemy regarded in the Jewish law, that each one hearing words of this nature was bound to rend his clothes on the spot, as a sign of abhorrence. The Talmuds also say, respecting testimony to such language: “When witnesses speak out a blasphemy which they have heard, then all hearing the blasphemy are bound to rend their garments.”* This law of blasphemy, “as it was understood among the Jews, extended not only to the offence of impiously using the name of the Supreme Being, but to every usurpation

* Lightfoot.

of his authority, or arrogation by a created being of the honor and power belonging to him alone. Like the crime of treason among men, its essence consisted in acknowledging or setting up the authority of another sovereign than one's own, or invading the power belonging exclusively to him."*

Often had the Messiah startled his audiences by his claims either to God's attributes or to the Godhead itself; but the majesty and the mightiness of the power clearly inherent in him had borne down opposition; and the clamors raised at his seeming assumptions were lost in the loud shouts by men healed of all diseases, and by their friends; joy, love, gratitude, triumphing at the time. Once, however, they took up stones to stone him, "for blasphemy," they said; "and because that thou being a man makest thyself God."

Here now, before the Sanhedrim; charged with the same thing; condemned to death for it; violence used; that charge of blasphemy evidently one that was to go out officially from this hall, and to be repeated before the multitudes of the Passover;—he made no disclaimer, but allowed the record of his claims to the Godhead to stand. And so it remains;—condemned for making himself God, and executed for it, he admitting the charge, and, without protest of error on their part, allowing them to proceed.†

* J. Pickering, LL.D. See also Lev. xxiii, 16; Deut. xiii.

† Jewish writers all say, that, admitting the Gospel historians to be true, this must be the view of the case. Mr. Jos. Salvador, a physician and learned Jew of Paris, in a recent work, "*Histoire des Institutions de Moïse et du Peuple Hébreu*," says, "But Jesus, in presenting new theories, and giving new forms to those already promulgated, speaks of himself as God." In a note he adds: "The

In the large court adjoining this hall, watching all these proceedings with an agitated, and often failing heart, was a disciple, ardent, quick, and yet weak ;— he who had said impetuously at the supper, " Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." " Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." " I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death." The disciples had fled when their Master was seized at Gethsemane, but Peter and John had followed the crowd in their midnight progress along the streets ; and John, having influence at the high priest's house, had got Peter admitted within the precincts. In the court, at some suitable spot, a fire had been built ; for the night was cold : and, as Peter sat there among the soldiers, peering timidly but anxiously around, he was charged by some one of the female attendants with having been also with Christ. He denied it : " Woman I know him not."*—It was a terrible fall from the high professions that he had made, and from his vaunted readiness to die with Christ : his impulsiveness wanted the calm and immovable courage of John, which led this loving disciple afterwards to stand by the cross, and to show his affection for his Master even there. Peter was, in after times, one of the boldest of Christian ministers, and fully redeemed himself from the con-

expression '*Son of God*' was in common use among the Jews, to designate a man of remarkable wisdom and piety. It was not in this sense that Jesus Christ used it." In another note, respecting the rending of his garments by Caiaphas, he adds, " I repeat that the expression '*Son of God*' includes here the idea of God himself : the fact is already established and all the subsequent events confirm it."

* Luke xxii, 57.

tempt forced on us by this conduct in the court, as we see him, shrinking, denying, timid and false. He shrunk away, soon, from the brightness of the fire ; and approached the arched way ; but was there recognized by the woman keeping the gate, who said, " This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. "—One false step ; and now another : for he declared, with an oath, " I do not know the man. " .

The scene in the hall itself, during these denials by the disciple, had become, as we have seen, tumultuous, with outcries and wrath and violence. Peter saw his Master maltreated, bound as the latter was, and incapable of resistance, if there had been any disposition to resist, which there was not : he saw the rush of the crowd in that more elevated place of judgment : he heard their cries of execration and of abhorrence, affected or real ; saw that face, so glorious even still in its majesty of kindness and its forgivingness, spit upon and buffeted ; he witnessed the madness that ruled there ; and saw the great triumph that lighted up the faces of the high priest and other leaders, as they felt that their enemy was now securely entangled among their toils, and could not escape. As the torches threw their ruddy light upon all the scene, and portions of the tumultuous crowd were thrown into strong relief, or retiring into the shadows, were succeeded by others, the faces bore still the same expression of wrath, and malignity, and triumph ;—among them only that one face showing benevolence, and gentleness, and kindness. Peter saw and heard all ; too anxious for his Master not to be closely observant, yet shrinking from being himself observed.

There came, at last, a lull in the noises ; for morn-

ing was now approaching, and the rulers, having done their deeds of darkness to their satisfaction, were separating, in order to prepare for the more formal meeting of the Sanhedrim, which must be held at the earliest hour of the day. Peter lingered still. His heart had failed him in his temptation,—that which Christ had cautioned him to pray against—and he despised himself for the weakness which he felt was still on him: but he could not bring himself to leave the place; and he hung about the court in a strange tumult in his heart, affection, reverence, anxiety, fear. Probably his Master, in some of the latter scenes, had noticed the disciple's face filled with affection and yet fright; and had also met Peter's eyes among the crowd.—Another temptation to the disciple, and he cowered under it still more; his heart entirely giving away, till he seemed to be transformed into another man. A person said to him, "Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech betrayeth thee;"—for the Galileans interchanged some sounds in their language so as to make some of their words difficult to be understood by the people of Judea. He cursed and swore:—"I know not the man of whom ye speak." The words caught the ear of the Messiah; and he turned and looked on the wretched culprit;—on that face so filled with fright and shame;—the eyes of the Saviour expressing compassion mixed with gentle reproach. It was Peter, the boaster that he would die with him; and the cock, now giving warning of approaching day, had not crowed twice, before he had thrice denied his Lord:—this last time with oaths.

At this look of Christ, the disciple went out, and wept bitterly.

The faint dawn, struggling through the night, and coming slowly over Olivet, saw then, in those streets, a man convulsed with grief and shame, humbled and self-accusing, and filled with remorse :—not much, seemingly, in that large city, and this tumultuous world ; but yet a sight that angels love to look upon ; for, in such penitential feelings, souls are purified and saved.

Peter, afterwards, became strong and brave for his Lord, confessing him boldly before rulers, and amid direst persecutions : and, it is believed, unflinchingly met a martyr's death in his Master's cause.

CHAPTER XL.

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.

THE day at last broke fully over Jerusalem ; and the people in that region being early-risers, the vast multitude in and about the city were soon astir, ignorant yet of the scenes at Caiaphas' house, and thinking with gladness of the occasion before them ; for the day succeeding the Passover-meal was always their high festival day. The whole of the Passover season was to be a time of rejoicing,* but this day was always given to peculiar ceremonies, and sacri-

* See Deut. xvi, 10-12.

fices for feasting ; and, as it was the sixth day of the week, (our Friday,) and the morrow would be the Sabbath,—a more solemn time—it seemed to them that an unusual enjoyment of festivity was to be crowded into this day.

On this the 15th of Nisan, all the males were bound to appear in the court of the temple, bringing with them a burnt-offering for their appearance and a double peace-offering, one for the solemnity, and one for the joy of the times. These offerings were called, in their language, *Chagigah*,* a word meaning *festivating* or *rejoicing* ; and were to be a bullock, or sheep, (2 Chron. xxx, 24, and xxxv, 7, 8,) quite distinct from the sacrifice for the Passover supper, and for a different purpose. Part of this *chagigah* offering was given to the priest, and with the remainder “they proceeded to their feastings together, with great mirth and rejoicings, according to the manner of that festival.”† This day was also the one from which the fifty days to Pentecost were to be numbered ; and (which usually added greatly to its joyousness,) it was the time when the first fruits of their barley harvest were to be presented to God ; before which no one was permitted to cut any grain ;‡ and so this day was called a sacred day. The cutting of this first fruit was a matter of ceremony. Those who were deputed by the Sanhedrim for the ceremony of reaping it went forth in the evening of the feast (*Chagigah*) day ; and people flocked with them to see the sight, and also

* From the verb *chagag*, to dance, to keep or celebrate a feast by dancing.

† Lightfoot.

‡ Leviticus xxiii, 9-11.

that it might be done with the greater pomp. When it grew dusk, he that was about to reap said, "The sun is set;" and all said, "Well." He repeated, "The sun is set;" and the people replied again, "Well:" "With this sickle;" "Well:" "With this sickle;" "Well:" "In this basket;" "Well:" "In this basket;" "Well."—And if it happened on the Sabbath day, he said, "On this Sabbath;" "Well:" "On this Sabbath;" "Well:" "I will Reap;" "Reap:" "I will Reap;" "Reap." And so, as he said this thrice over, they answered to it all, "Well."* Their regular Sabbath (as, after sunset, was the case in this instance) did not hinder this ceremony; and, on the next day, the sheaf was offered in the temple, after which, and not before, the Jewish people might proceed to their harvesting.

Such, in the regular order of things, would have been this Chagigah or great festival day, a time of peculiar feasting and rejoicing; and with the feelings suited to it the great multitudes rose on that (Friday) morning, in the brightness and freshness of the dawn.

But the Sanhedrim had been yet earlier risers; for their work must be quickly done. As the earliest morning light crept down into the judgment-hall, and the court-yard, and upon the wearied and exhausted individuals there,—the Messiah still among them,—the members of the Sanhedrim, with the chief priests, and elders, and scribes† might have been seen gliding towards the house of Caiaphas, where they were soon formed into the regular council prescribed by their law. They could now pronounce a legal judgment;

* Lightfoot.

† Mark xv. 1; Luke xxii, 66.

and their action was rapid, the way to it having all been prepared during the night. The Messiah was placed before them.

"Art thou the Christ?" they asked.

"If I tell you, ye will not believe," he replied; "and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."

—They were impatient; for time was pressing; and all cried out as with one voice,

"Art thou the Son of God?"

"Ye say that I am :—" (the Jewish form; equivalent to, "I am.")

"What need we any further witness?" they cried, "for we ourselves have heard his own mouth."*

—He was immediately condemned.

From this he was taken, while it was yet early,† to Pilate's judgment-hall.

In the meantime, by means of various spreading reports, the multitudes were coming to a consciousness of these transactions, and they stood appalled;—their senses almost paralyzed by what they heard. Their enthusiasm towards the Messiah had been very great. All had taken him to be at least a prophet: many believed him to be much more than this. The rumor of a few days previous, that "the kingdom of heaven was shortly to appear," had turned all eyes towards him in expectation of something wonderful in which he was to be the great and glorious leader; and they had conversed about it among themselves, until curiosity, if not enthusiastic, had highest power. They remembered also the scenes in the temple; his majesty

* Luke xxii, 66-71.

† John xviii, 28.

of appearance there ; his teachings, and the force of his words ; his countenance, so grand in its changing expressions, as he hurled the merited woes upon Pharisees and Scribes ; they remembered his healings in the temple, and the general joy caught from the healed men ;—the hosannas shouted out, and caught up again, and repeated, till the temple courts were filled with the sounds of glorifying him as God ; and the scenes on the descent of Olivet, where the throngs were spreading their garments in his way, and hailing him as king, and more than king—" Hosanna," " Save, Lord, we beseech thee." Those among the multitudes who had not witnessed these things had heard them repeated in their ears so often, and with so much of the eastern enthusiasm of manner, that they had caught the same feeling :—and now ! Now the rumor went, that he had been condemned, at a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim, *for blasphemy* ; that witnesses had sworn to his saying that he would destroy their temple ; that he had been sentenced to death, and was at present before the Roman governor, whither their rulers had taken him, in order to have the sentence confirmed !

Those of the multitudes who hastened towards the judgment-seat of Pilate, found there that the rumor was true ; and found the Roman soldiers by the gates and in the judgment hall. The great Roman power had hemmed him in on every side. A shudder, as if their own dissolution were at hand, crept through the crowds ; among whom, however, the agents of the Sanhedrim were now also at work, infusing doubts, and uttering anathemas against him whom the rulers had condemned for blasphemy.

Pilate is described by Philo, a learned Jewish writer* of that age, as a man "with a nature inflexible and implacable in its arrogance:" he had been appointed Procurator of Judea, A. D. 26, and had made himself odious to the Jews by his cruelty and savage nature, a specimen of which is given in Luke xiii, 1. After ruling for ten years, being accused by the Jews before the Governor-general in Syria, he was deposed and sent to Rome to answer the charges; whence he was banished to Vienne, where he is said to have died by his own hands.

Before this man, the Messiah, still bound, now stood for trial, his accusers, who were the whole Sanhedrim, having followed him and being now there also with their charges and their fully settled plans.

Judgment among the Romans was always public, and *sub dio* ; (in the open air ;) and, in order to make their decrees more solemn, officers of high rank took with them a tessellated pavement (in Heb. Gabbatha, John xix, 13,) which was placed on an elevated spot : on this pavement was put the *Bema* or judgment seat ; and on this the judge took his place, when a trial was about to be commenced. This was, in the present case, in front of the Governor's palace, and about it, the elders were now standing for accusation : but they refused to enter the palace itself, that being a Gentile's residence, entering which would defile them till evening, and prevent their joining in the Chagigah ceremonies on that day.† Pilate, however,

* Born in Alexandria, where he wrote about the year A. D. 40.

† The reader will observe that this removes the seeming difficulty in John xviii, 28, which has sometimes puzzled commentators. The *passover* mentioned there must have been the *Chagigah*, eaten during the day, and from which any defilement in the morn-

could take the accused person within the palace for private examination there. The hall, back of the judgment-seat, had its guard of soldiers and officers ; and the Governor had also his officers at the *Bema*, where he took his seat.

Pilate, according to the Roman legal usage, demanded of the accusers what charges they had to bring : but they tried to evade the question, and to see what their own authority could effect.

"If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee," they said. The Governor rejoined with a sneer,

"Take ye him and judge him according to your law :" and they now showed their object :

"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."*

He saw their purpose : and saw the calm and dignified face before him, the noble expression of features, the grandeur even yet marked upon that brow. How unlike a culprit ! How strange that such a person should be brought before him as a malefactor to be put to death ! He looked on the countenances of the crowd of accusers, malignant amid all their attempts at hypocrisy ; fierce, though under the assumptions of rank and justice : wrathful in their very first words before him ; and lighted up with eagerness for revenge. They were dark, scowling faces, though their owners stood in robes of office around the bound individual

ing would have debarred them. Such defilement continuing only till sunset, could not exclude them from any religious duty after sunset ; but they wanted to share the Chagigah feast. The whole seven days' feast of unleavened bread was often called the *Passover*, (as in Josephus, *Bel. ii*, 1, § 3, also *Ant. xi*, 4, § 8 :) and in 2 Chron. xxxv, 7, 8, bullocks are called the *Passover* offerings.

* John xviii, 28-31.

before him, whose features expressed, even then, only benignity and kindness, mingled with calmness and resignation.

He again demanded of them an accusation, and they now brought forward a political charge, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute unto Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king."* The Governor gazed at him, and felt a wish for a private interview : he would not have such a person maligned helplessly by those hypocritical men. So Pilate withdrew to the hall in the rear, and had Christ brought there to him.

"Art thou the king of the Jews?" he asked. The Messiah did not answer to this, but himself put the a question,

"Sayest thou this thing thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"—The reply to that was indignant,

"Am I a Jew?—Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee to me : what hast thou done?" The Messiah replied :

"My kingdom is not of this world : then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews :† but now is my kingdom not from hence."

"Art thou a king, then?"

"Thou sayest that I am a king [equivalent to Yes, I am a king.] To this end was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

* Luke xxiii, 2.

† It is observable that here also the distinction is kept up between the people and the rulers, the latter obviously meant by the word Jews ; it is well to bear it in mind in the further reading of John respecting the trial and crucifixion.

"What is truth?" said Pilate, a sceptic probably as regards all truth, as a Roman courtier might well be; and still more so, surrounded as he was with such hypocritical faces as were those of the accusers; for he had immediately seen that "for envy" they had delivered Christ.*

He did not wait for an answer to his question, but went out before the expectant crowds, who were eager for his return. The Sanhedrim had felt that there was good reason to dread such an interview: and they stood now, with ill-disguised anxiety on their faces, and in alarm. Pilate's words confirmed their fears.

"I find no fault in him at all."† Filled now with open fierceness, they pressed warmly once more the accusation, which they believed must ultimately alarm the Governor.

"He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."‡—From Galilee! thought Pilate: and he was glad; for it would give him an opportunity to throw the trouble and the odium that might arise from this trial on Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee, who was now in Jerusalem. He probably also expected some gratification of spite in the perplexity it would occasion Herod: for these two governors were at enmity at this time. He therefore sent the Messiah to Herod, who was pleased; for now, at last, this ruler had an opportunity of seeing one of whom he had so often heard; and rumors of whose miracles were so astonishing that he had even taken him to be John risen from the dead. He hoped now to see some miracle performed.

* Matt. xxvii, 18.

† John xvii, 38.

‡ Luke xxiii, 5.

Before this monster of lust and cruelty, the Messiah was now standing : the accusers having accompanied him there. They might hope for better success before such a mixture of meanness, and weakness and barbarity, as Herod had shown himself to be in the case of the Baptist : and they now urged their accusation with new vehemence ; while the Tetrarch himself put question after question, with greater and greater bitterness and savage feeling, as he found himself unanswered in any one of them. The Saviour opposed to the contemptible ruler and his insolent questions, as he had previously done to his accusers before Pilate,* only the calm dignity of silence ; until the Tetrarch, irritated by receiving no reply, turned on him his soldiers, who, with the ruler, "set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe : " after which he was sent back to Pilate. These missions between the two governors brought about a reconciliation between them, and they now became friends.†

The governor of Judea was perplexed ; for on the one hand was the Sanhedrim, with the weight of its position, and its official condemnation in this case, with accusations also of a political nature, which, if disregarded, might bring him into trouble ; and, on the other, he believed in the Messiah's innocence, and saw their motive in all this malignant action ; and he had been also cautioned by his wife, warned in a dream‡ "to have nothing to do with that just man." He made an effort at extricating himself, through an old custom, which was to yield up to the people's clemency on this day, any malefactor whom they

* Matt. xxvii, 12. † Luke xxiii, 6-12. ‡ Matt. xxvii, 19.

might demand; and now, as they were becoming clamorous for this favor, a hope sprang up in the governor that they might judge differently from their rulers, and might require of him the accused. He said to them,

“Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?”*

The rulers were startled; but they were not to be readily foiled. They immediately mingled with the multitude,† repeating charge after charge against the Messiah; sustaining these with all the authority of their office; appealing to the people’s reverence for their temple, there in full view; and using such other devices as their malignity could invent; and soon there were symptoms of disapprobation at Pilate’s suggestion. There was in prison a notorious felon, Barabbas by name, put there for robbery and murder, and attempt at sedition; and from those crowds—probably many of them of a base sort, such as could sympathize with that culprit—after a while, arose a demand:

“Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.”‡

“What will ye then that I shall do unto him ye call the King of the Jews?” And they answered with the terrific cry,

“*Crucify him!*”

Pilate was horror-struck, and attempted to remonstrate:

“Why, what evil hath he done?” But the cry was only vociferated more fiercely,

* Mark xv, 9.

† Matt. xxvii, 20.

‡ Luke xxiii, 18.

“Crucify him!”*

They were going far beyond their own law, which ordered stoning to death, as the severest punishment for the greatest crime known among them, namely, blasphemy : but this did not satisfy them now. They demanded the most cruel and the most painful of all Roman punishments, one exciting such horror among the Romans themselves, that Cicero says of it, “*Ab oculis, auribusque et omni cogitatione hominum removendum est :*”† *it should be banished from eyes and ears, and even from the very thoughts of men :*—so ignominious also, that it was inflicted, as the last mark of detestation, on the vilest of people,—the punishment of robbers and murderers, provided that *they were slaves* ; but if they were free, it was thought too infamous a punishment for such, let their crimes be what they might.‡

One word from the governór,—an order for acquittal—would have been decisive ; and we may wonder that it was not given, when he heard their horrible demand, especially as he had just said to them, “Behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching the things whereof ye accuse him : no, nor yet Herod : for I sent you to him, and lo nothing worthy of death is done unto him :”§—but we must remember, not as an exculpation, but as one of the facts in the case, that Pilate was amenable to Rome, to which their accusations against himself, could easily be sent. He thought he would try whether their malice might not be satisfied if the object of their vengeance should be degraded and

* Mark xv, 12-14.

† *In Verrem.*

‡ Adam Clarke.

§ Luke xxiii, 14, 15.

punished before their eyes ; his claims of kingship being made the badges of his disgrace. He, therefore, had the Messiah scourged ; and delivered him into the hands of his soldiers, who platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and put on him a purple robe, and said, " Hail, King of the Jews !" and next struck him with the palms of their hands ; they smote him on the head with a reed, and spit upon him, and bowed their knees in mock worship ;* and Pilate now came out and said,

" Behold I bring him forth to you that ye may know that I find no fault in him." Jesus was led before them wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Mockery it was, but, even still, there was a dignity in his manner which they could not tear from him or disguise, and a strange Presence recognized by Pilate even there, as if the kingship thrust forward in mockery was felt to be actual truth. He said to them,

" Behold the Man !"—and there broke out again that fierce demand :

" Crucify him, crucify him." The governor saw that all efforts at conciliation were fruitless ; there was now only one shout from them, and that for blood ; he looked down on the fierce, and determined faces, and saw no relenting there, only malice, and now but half-suppressed rage against himself. He quailed before what this might effect against himself ; it would be the easiest and safest thing for him to yield. But, even in yielding, he put in a protest :—" Take ye him and crucify him ; for I find no fault in him." In their triumph now at success, and at-

* John ix, 1-3 ; Mark xv, 18, 19.

tempts at justification, they overshot their mark. "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."—The governor was startled and amazed; it was a new aspect in the affair; for hitherto they had been pressing it upon him on political grounds. The strange-dignity of the accused had before impressed him;—his calmness, truly like that of a God, while all were raging around him for his destruction;—the majesty which no mocking could put down. He went back to the hall again, and summoned the Messiah. "Whence art thou?" he said.

There was no reply. Pilate was urgent for an answer, and tried to bring the terrors of his power to his aid.

"Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?" The answer was:

"Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

Outside, there was a feeling of impatience becoming strong among the rulers. They dared not come to the hall, for that would defile the hypocrites; but these interviews and colloquies in it were always subjects to them of distrust and fear. Previously they had found their cause suffer from such an examination by Pilate; and now, when he appeared again before them, he made still further efforts for the release of Christ. But they had one powerful means kept in reserve for extremities, and such an extremity seemed now to have come. Of all the Roman emperors, Tiberius (then ruling) was the most jealous and

implacable; and, in his eyes, *majestatis crimen omnium accusationum complementum est* (Tacitus, Ann. iii, 38 :) "*the crime of treason is the climax of all accusations.*" They cried out loudly to Pilate :

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend : whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar,"*

—*Thou art not well affected towards Cæsar :*

He resisted no more. They had conquered; and they knew now that, with the threat of accusing the governor, whose soul crouched with fear before the bloody tyrant, their triumph was secured.

The governor seated himself on the judgment-seat at the tessellated pavement, and the Messiah was brought before them once more. He said,

"Behold your king;" and there arose a storm of wrath, with shouts,

"Away with him! away with him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" he asked.

—They were now mad with rage;—for they cried, the chief priests leading in it,

"*We have no king but Cæsar.*"†

The rulers must have felt a thrill of horror in their hearts, as the words burst from them; for it had always been their boast that they had no king but God, and would acknowledge no other; and this they had always put forward as their grounds of resistance to the Roman power and its claims. But madness filled them now. Their words were blasphemy and treason against God, according to all that they had ever professed before: they were making themselves contemptible in their own eyes and abhorrent to

* John xix, 4-12.

† John xix, 13-16.

all the nation ; and faces in the multitude there showed horror at the cry ; but there was no open protest ; and the blasphemy and treason stand yet against the rulers in the madness of that hour.

Pilate, on the judgment-seat, called for water, and performed a significant act. He washed his hands, publicly, so that all might see it, and declared before them, " I am innocent of the blood of this just man : see ye to it." An answering cry came from the whole assembly there ; and it contains, under the circumstances, the most frightful words ever uttered by human lips : "*His blood be on us and on our children !*"*

"Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required."† He had Barabbas released then, and delivered into their hands.

What were the feelings of the multitudes in Jerusalem, all this while ?—the people who had cried their hosannas, the admiring throngs that had gazed on his miracles, the men cured, the blind men of Siloam and of Jericho, and the halt and blind healed in the temple. Lazarus, the disciples, where were they ? was there no voice from any one of them ? There must have been a sickening sensation throughout the city, a feeling that a dark, hellish deed was being done, and a resistance in men's hearts to the whole proceeding of the Sanhedrim. "Why," the people must have thought, "why, the secret stealing upon the party in Gethsemane ? why the night-council ? why the violation of all precedents and of all Jewish law ? why this indecent haste ?" The hellish malice of the Pharisees and chief priests was manifest ; the instigations of the crowd to demand Barabbas, a robber and murderer,

* Matt. xxvii, 25.

† Luke xxiii, 24.

and to demand crucifixion as regards Jesus; their goadings on of the unwilling Governor;—all this was too transparent not to be seen through and understood; and the hearts of all true men must have recoiled from it in horror and disgust. But what could they do? It was now but three hours after sunrise; and, already, Pilate had pronounced the sentence, and Jesus was in the hands of the Roman soldiers; and the power of that colossal Roman empire had closed around him, and he was hemmed in by it to his death. True, it was reported that the Sanhedrim had, in formal conclave, condemned him for blasphemy, even on his own words before them; but men, through the city, still recoiled with a sickening sensation from the whole thing, as a dark, hellish work. Those who thought of God's justice, even if they did not believe in Christ, trembled; those who believed in him, felt crushed to the earth, and knew the truth of their Master's word,—that a woe was gathering, to burst over all their land.

There was one man among them almost porenzied. It was Judas. He had probably hoped that there would be some way of escape for the Messiah, some miracle from him perhaps for his own deliverance: and he had scarcely anticipated such an end. He had the money: Christ, he had hoped, would escape. Thus he had doubtless reasoned: and the Pharisees, he had thought, would be doubly overmatched. Therefore, the keenest man in all Jerusalem in watching the proceedings of the council, and at the Prætorium, was, doubtless, this traitor, in whose heart remorse was taking its everlasting hold. Now the end had come, and with it came recollections and anticipations, and a

fearfulness of horror ; for hell was already lighted up in his heart. He saw the flashing of triumph in the Pharisees' eyes ; remorse was blazing in a frenzy from his own. He hurried to their council, which seems to have adjourned from the Prætorium to the temple precincts, and entered it with the cry,

"I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." There was only a cold-blooded, sneering answer :

"What is that to us ? See thou to that." He flung down their money, and rushed out. Was the woe at the Paschal supper pursuing him ? Had it not rung in his ears all the night and all the morning ? "Woe unto the man by whom the Son of man was betrayed ; it had been better for that man if he had not been born."* Remorse and the woe were upon him, and the wretch immediately committed suicide by hanging.†

The Sanhedrim gathered up the money : it was not lawful, they said, to put it into the treasury of the temple, as it was the price of blood ; so they bought with it a field for burying strangers, and called the place "*The Field of Blood.*"

* Matt. xxvi, 24. † Matt. xxvii, 5.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

PILATE had yielded. As soon as he had discovered the motive of the Jewish leaders, "that for envy they had delivered him;"* and saw that they proposed making himself the instrument of their malice; and moreover saw the greatness of the Messiah, under these trying circumstances, "he determined to let him go;"† but his own nature was too pusillanimous to allow him to hold unflinchingly to the right amid dangers to himself; and at that *argumentum ad hominem*, at the last, he had withered and lost his manhood. We can almost see him, as, in the symbolical act, he was washing his hands; ashamed of himself; trying thus, but unsatisfactorily to his own heart, to shake off the responsibility of the condemnation; warm in admiration of the wonderful being whom he had delivered to the leaders to be crucified; and despising and hating them. What a contempt he must have felt for men, who, while so instigated by deadly malice, and urging him to crucify an innocent person, had yet refused to enter his hall, lest they should be defiled by crossing the threshold of a Gentile, and so should be unfitted for the religious ceremonies of the day.

He was glad to see them go at last and vacate his premises; but, as he turned from them, it must have

* Matt. xxvii, 18.

† Acts iii, 13.

been with many compunctions as to his own conduct, and a sense of meanness and degradation in himself. He felt however that he had obtained one great triumph over these base men ; and that was, when they had given the lie to all their former pretensions, and had lowered their pride, and had abjured all that they had ever declared sacred and inviolable, and in that mad cry from them, " We have no king but Cæsar."

Before they left the Prætorium, there had been the usual prelude to capital punishment among the Romans, which was a scourging by whips in the case of milder death-penalties ; by the *flagella* when it was to be by crucifixion. Horace terms the latter scourgings *horribilia* ; and persons often died under this infliction alone ;* as well they might, for the lashes to the whip used in this case were knotted with bones or heavy indented circles of bronze, or terminated with hooks.†

It was against all Jewish law to examine a cause, pass sentence, and put it in execution the same day,‡ but law and usage were nothing to their leaders on this occasion. They wanted the life-blood, no matter at what cost or how procured.

The movement from the judgment hall was onward towards the place of crucifixion ; the Saviour, as was customary on such occasions, bearing his cross ; though soon, owing to his exhaustion, the soldiers compelled a man, coming from the country, to assist in supporting its weight. The crowds had gathered in large numbers ; some of them stupefied, amazed, stunned, and, all helpless now ; for any resistance, if

* Jahn's Archæology.

† Anthon's Dic. of Greek and Ro. Antiquities.

‡ Jahn.

they so felt disposed, would be insurrectionary, and would only bring on them the quick vengeance of Rome : some were exultant and noisy in their demonstrations of triumph and joy. As the company moved onward to the place of crucifixion, weeping was heard in the crowd ; and the Saviour turned toward the sounds.—Sympathy, kindness, commiseration at last, and in that company ; people wailing and lamenting aloud ! They were women, and their voices sounded strangely among those mixed, discordant noises, where tauntings and revilings and rejoicings were the general manifestations of feeling. He turned sadly towards the women : exhaustion and pain showed themselves in his tones : but he thought, even then, more of these mourners than of himself.

“ Daughters of Jerusalem,” he said, “ weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?”*

Once more onward, towards the place of execution ; the crowds half-awed by the solemn words, and by the indefinite danger foreshadowed in the language of one always so prophet-like ; but the leaders were there applying fresh stimulants to rage and to tauntings and obloquy. A Roman officer ; Roman soldiers ; Jesus with his burden ; two malefactors also, with their crosses, bearing him company, as if an additional degradation was attempted to be forced upon him by their

companionship ; the rulers of the Jews still unwearied and determined to see the end fully accomplished ; the crowds, some awed and silent, some vociferous and insulting ; the women, their voices of wailing mingling with the harsh sounds of bold, fierce men ;—such was the company that advanced along the thoroughfares of Jerusalem from the Governor's palace to Calvary.

A spot called Golgotha, signifying "the place of a skull," being a slight elevation with its summit in full view, was to be the scene of the crucifixion : and they soon arrived there ; for it was not far from the Prætorium, and just outside of the city walls. There the preparations were quickly made. The garments of the person to be executed were always the perquisites of the Roman guards ; and those of our Saviour were now divided among the quaternion or four soldiers, the outer one falling to one of them by lot. The preparations for nailing him to the cross were soon completed. It was customary, in respect to the very horrible pains suffered in this first act, to give, previously, to the individual, a stupefying potion : and such an one was now handed to the Messiah : but after tasting it, he refused to drink.*

He was then nailed to the cross.

"Father, forgive them," he said, as they did this, "for they know not what they do."†

The company had been painfully attentive, even the most hardened and cruel ; a deep horror, a solemnity, a shrinking in their nerves, as they heard the grating sounds of the nails ; a shuddering through the crowd ; sobs, and sounds of weeping here and there ; and then a shout of derision and scorn,

* Matt. xvii, 34.

† Luke xxiii, 34.

with bitter tauntings, drowning all other sounds ; such was the scene. What fiends men can be when under wicked leaders, and stimulated by hellish passions ! and devils seemed to have a terrible power there, in that hour of the crucifixion of Christ. The cross now had been put in its place, and elevated ; and it stood there, with its burden bloody from the stripes and the nailing, and with its inscription in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, "*Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.*"* The Jewish leaders had requested Pilate to change it to a different form, declaring a pretension to be king ; but he refused. The chief priests, and scribes, and elders were there, leading on the tauntings : " He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God." Their action, their language, their feelings were hellish : there seemed to be nothing human left in them ; and yet these men were the rulers of the nation.

The crowds joined mostly in these cries, and in their own peculiar way. They had followed on ; some in the interest of the rulers and their creatures, some from idle curiosity, some from better motives ; but there had doubtless been in many the expectation of some great phenomena,—a great miracle, perhaps some supernatural effort at release, some struggle by that strange power in him for deliverance ; and now

* Latin was the official language ; Greek was the one usually spoken in that country by the learned ; and Hebrew, or rather its cognate, Aramean by the common people.

that there had been none, they were angered, and would feel that there was some revenge due them for their disappointment. They tried to have it, led, too, as they were by men in authority ; the soldiers also, and even the two crucified malefactors, or, at least, one of them, joined in their mockings and taunting cries. The shouts of the people showed how the cunning device of the priests in suborning witnesses to say that they had heard him threaten to destroy their temple, had succeeded in revolutionizing their feelings ; for their cry was, " Ah, thou who destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross."* The priests sneered at him, in their own peculiar way,—“ He saved others ; himself he cannot save.” One of the malefactors by and by, struck to the heart by the strange scene ;—the revilings cast on one so innocent ; the gentleness and forgivingness of the sufferer in his greatest pains ;—the contrast between the raging, venomous people and Christ,—rebuked his companion as he was saying, “ If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.”

“ Dost thou not fear God,” he said, “ seeing that thou art in the same condemnation ? And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due rewards of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss.” He added to Jesus himself,

“ Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

It was but a simple prayer : it was the first appeal ever made to the Cross of Christ ; and it was an-

swered in kindness : " To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."*

There stood near to the cross a group,—a singular one it was amid that scene of scoffing, and malice, and triumph at Christ's sufferings ;—for the faces and actions of these persons gave demonstration how deeply they sympathized with the sufferer. They were his mother ; her sister, wife of Cleophas ; Mary Magdelene ; and the faithful John. Best love is ever bravest ; and these loved the most. They stood there, true to him ; their souls writhing under those tauntings, and those scornful, insulting cries. They looked towards the cross ; and there they saw the marks of agony ; the anguish apparent in his face and in the spasms and convulsions of his body ;—that face, so gentle and calm, and so God-like always, but now also clouded with the pain expressing itself in every line and feature ;—the eyes now bloodshot ;—the brow and form wounded and bloody ;—the languor of exhaustion stealing over the limbs and frame. Not one word, however, of complaint from him ; his eyes still showed love to them and to all. His voice and tone when he spoke, were now, as always, in mercy, and kindness and love.

He addressed them ; but his words were few, in consequence of his spasms of agony :

" Woman, behold thy son !" and to John,

" Behold thy mother :"

Those tones had the marks of pain in them ; but yet how true they were to his strong, undying love ! John took her from that hour, as his own mother, to his home.†

* Luke xxiil, 39-43.

† John xix, 25-27.

The hours dragged on ; and the agony increased. In one of our best authorities we have the following account of the effects of crucifixion :

“ 1.—The position of the body is unnatural, the arms being extended back and almost immovable. In case of the *least motion* an extremely painful sensation is experienced in the hands and feet,* which are pierced with nails, and the back, which is lacerated with stripes. 2.—The nails being driven through the parts of the hands and feet which abound in nerves and tendons, create the most exquisite anguish. 3.—The exposure of his many wounds to the open air brings on an inflammation which every moment increases the poignancy of the suffering. 4.—In those parts of the body which are distended or pressed, more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back into the veins. The consequence is that a greater quantity of blood finds its way from the aorta into the head and stomach than would be carried there by a natural and undisturbed circulation. The blood-vessels of the head become pressed and swollen, which, of course, causes pain and redness of the face. The circumstance of the blood being impelled in more than ordinary quantities into the stomach, is an unfavorable one also, because it is that part of the system which not only admits of the blood being stationary, but is peculiarly exposed to mortification. The aorta not being at liberty to empty, in a free and undisturbed way as formerly, the blood which it re-

* Gregory of Nazianzan has asserted that one nail only was driven through them ; but Cyprian, (*De passione*,) who had been a personal witness to crucifixions, and is, consequently, in this case, a better authority, states, on the contrary, that two nails or spikes were driven, one through each foot.—*Jahn's Archaeology*.

ceives from the left ventricle of the heart, is unable to receive its usual quantity. The blood of the lungs is, therefore, unable to find a free circulation. This general obstruction extends its effects likewise to the right ventricle, and the consequence is an internal excitement and exertion and anxiety, which are more intolerable than the anguish of death itself. All the large vessels about the heart, and all the veins and arteries in that part of the system, on account of the accumulation and pressure of blood, are a source of inexpressible misery. 5.—The degree of anguish is gradual in its increase, and the person crucified is able to live under it, commonly till the third, and sometimes even till the seventh day.”*

The group of friends felt all the bitterness of those still continued gibes and tauntings, and the wagging of heads at him, by the passers by ; for the spot was at some thoroughfare, probably near the angle where the walls of Acra and of Zion met, and by the gate Gennath, in the latter. They were themselves a marked object ; with their deep sympathy depicted in their faces ; and many a look of contempt was directed at them ; but no violence dared be offered in the presence of the Roman officer and his soldiers : and the elders and rabble felt too much engrossed with their tauntings of Christ to give much time to others of less note. Was there not one sentiment of compassion in the revilers ? no feeling for the anguish shown on that brow and in the convulsed limbs, the agony manifesting itself as it shot through all that frame ? Their words show only malignity, and spite, and triumph.

—But, after a while, as this was going on, every one in Jerusalem and in the region about it, became conscious of a singular gloom darkening the air and settling down over all objects ; becoming deeper and deeper ; coming silently and enwrapping everything, —the city, and temple, and mountains around. People stopped, and looked at each other in wonder ; and presently in alarm : for it was becoming night, although the time was at full mid-day. The crucifixion had been at nine o'clock :* it was now twelve ; but soon there was no sun to be seen in the sky, only the blackness of darkness everywhere. Men groped along in uncertainty of motion ; deep horror now in every heart. The Chagigah ceremonies had been going on in the city, and at the temple, and the great altar fires were blazing on Moriah with the sacrifices there. Very many of the people, it is true, had, from early morning, felt no heart for the festivities of this, their great day of rejoicing : for they had been stunned by the announcement of the seizure and binding, and condemnation of Christ, and by the scenes at the Prætorium ; and a sickening sensation had crept through them, when they heard of the crucifixion : but others, deceived by the artful proceedings of the Sanhedrim, or callous, or fickle, or unwilling to lose the rejoicings that had always made this day so gay an one, were proceeding with the Chagigah festivity, when this darkness came settling down over

* Third hour, (nine o'clock,) according to Mark xv, 25, which agrees with Matthew and Luke. The Gospel of John says at the sixth hour, (or noon,) which is evidently an error by transcribers ; the Greek letter representing six being very similar to that for three. In some of the best ancient Greek readings in John also we find the third hour.

their mirth, and substituted for it, horror and alarm. They left their feasts untouched : they sat in silence, or whispered to each other, or hastened to secret places, as if fearful that, in this blackening gloom, some mighty Avenger was coming through the air ready to strike,—they could not tell where, or whom, or how. Some ascended rapidly to the sacred precincts of the temple, thinking that perhaps there might be more safety or less alarm in that place ; and found the priests, with pallid faces, looking, in their white dresses about the altar lighted, up by the strong glare from its fires, more like unwilling spirits of an angry Jehovah aghast at their work, than like pacificators between God and man, and the ministers of joy on this festive day. There was universal horror, and a momentarily increasing fear amid these millions congregated at Jerusalem. The words of Christ to the women, on the way to Golgotha, were spreading among the crowds, “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children,” &c. : and people also remembered his frequent prophecies as to the city and the terrible doom it might expect. “ Had the time now come ? ” they thought. “ Was this the beginning ? ” Men sat down, covering their faces in the horror that was chilling them through ; or stood like statues, as if turned to marble in this fear that was paralyzing every faculty : women clasped their children to their hearts, and shed over them their silent tears, or broke into wailings at what seemed to be the doom already arrived.

All nature was mourning as at some horrible event ; and all thoughts were turned towards the scenes at Golgotha,—the cross, the victim, the deepening ago-

nies there. That spot was involved in the darkness, as if heaven would not look upon it, and was shrouding it from all sight ;—or, perhaps, as if heaven was sympathizing with the sufferings there, and veiling itself in gloom.

So the hours passed on, in this unnatural and frightful darkness, until the ninth hour (three o'clock) was near at hand. The anguish of Christ had been increasing, with all the peculiar mental as well as bodily distress belonging to that mode of suffering. Death was approaching, a death in which all the powers are strained into the fullest agony before they finally give way. The mind is fearfully affected ; and the writhings and distortions of the higher, intellectual nature, form the greatest of the horrors which precede the dissolution.

Such a spasm came now. There was a cry, extorted by its anguish—

“Eli ! Eli ! lama Sabasthani ! My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?”

Men with hearts steeled against all sympathy, and full of malignity, were still about the cross ; and they said,—mistaking the words—

“Let be : let us see whether Elias will come to save him.”

The mental spasm, however, was soon over ; and the Godlike nature in him had again the supremacy ; but what a horrible darkening there had been to bring forth that desponding cry !

During these pains, the body is parched by a burning sensation ; and to his complaint of thirst now, the soldiers filled a sponge with their vinegar, or sour

wine (their common drink,) and it was handed to him on the extremity of a hyssop stalk.

—The end had come. He said,

“It is finished.”*—“Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.”†

—One cry, a piercing, anguished cry, drawn from him by the death agony, and it was over.‡ The sufferings had ceased.

Nature, as if in sympathy, was convulsed. The earth shook as if it were in terror: the rocks were rent in sunder; the veil of the temple, hiding the holy of holies from the eyes of all but the high priest, was rent in twain from top to bottom, as by unseen hands; graves opened of their own accord, and bodies of the dead appeared moving about, as though the grave were resigning its power,—its dominion gone. The centurion who had been superintending the execution exclaimed, “Truly this was the Son of God.”§ A fear had come on all watching there, and others joined the officer in the exclamation: they smote on their breasts,|| and returned to the city, fear, sadness, remorse filling their hearts. The physical darkness had now passed away, and light was restored to the earth once more.¶

* John xix, 30.

† Luke xxiii, 46.

‡ Matt. xxvii, 59.

§ Matt. xxvii, 54.

|| Luke xxiii, 48.

¶ This darkness was undoubtedly miraculous; but there was a singular case of darkness, from natural, though still unexplained causes, on what is called in New England “The Dark Day,” which occurred on the 19th of May, 1780. President Dwight, in speaking of it, says: “Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared, and the fowls retired to roost. The legislature of Connecticut was then in session at Hartford. A very general opinion prevailed that the day of judgment was at hand. The House of Representatives being unable to transact their

The group of friends by the cross had not been the only sympathizers watching these sad events. There were others further off—people true to him still in their hearts, some of whom had followed him from Galilee,* but powerless to help. To them the former group had retired towards the last of these scenes. In addition to their sympathies, there were many very sad thoughts among his friends on that day, understanding, very imperfectly as they did, the nature of the kingdom which he had come to establish among men. Their love for him had given rise to many hopes of seeing him aggrandized in the world ; some hopes there had also been for themselves : all such hopes were quenched now.

Life in the malefactors still lingered on : and it was customary with the Romans, when this was the case, longer than they wished in any sufferer on the cross, to hasten death by breaking the bones of the legs with a mallet ; or, by plunging a spear into the heart ; or, by kindling a fire below, thus to hasten the end by suffocation. The day following this would be the Jewish Sabbath ; and it was important to have the bodies removed before sunset, when their holy day would commence : so the soldiers came and broke the bones of the malefactors, but there was no necessity for this violence on Saviour's body, and it was

business adjourned. A proposal to adjourn the Council was under consideration. When the opinion of Col. Davenport was asked, he answered, 'I am against an adjournment. The day of judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for an adjournment ; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty ; I wish therefore that candles may be lighted.' This darkness, like that at Jerusalem, seems to have been local.

* Luke xxiii, 49.

spared : one of them, however, to try whether there might not still be life, thrust a spear into his side, and there came out blood and water, decisive evidence that death had taken place.*

Silence had fallen gradually upon this scene ; as the leaders, fully sated in their revenge, had left ; and the people had dropped off towards their homes in fear and remorse. A few remained, watchers from affection ; and the Roman guard was still on duty there.

We turn to gaze on that spectacle ;—the cross, the body, the bloody marks on brow and limbs, the stamp of death on the victim slain ;—*slain for us*.

“ BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.”

* *Serum and blood*, showing that the blood had resolved itself into its constituent principles, as it always does after death.

“The researches of modern surgery have established the fact that an effusion of blood would have taken place in any case, being the natural consequences of such a wound, and is, under the circumstances, decisive evidence of the actual death of Christ.”—*Bloomfield, in loco*.

“In order to ascertain whether Christ was really dead or not, or whether he had merely fallen into a swoon, a soldier thrust his lance into his side (undoubtedly his left side,) but no signs of life appeared. If he had not been previously dead, a wound of this kind in his side would have put a period to his life, as has been shown by the physician Eschenbach and by Grunser. The part pierced was the *pericardium* ; hence lymph and blood flowed out.”—*Jahn's Archæology*.

ASCENES FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE BURIAL.

THE supernatural darkness had passed ; but the hearts of the multitudes were still palpitating with the fear and awe which the recent events had produced ; —the pall over all nature, the earthquake, the significant rending of the veil of the Holy of Holies, the dead moved from their graves. They felt that a horrible deed had been done, for which they might look for some avenging hand : and, when the people who had been at the crucifixion, and had joined in the derisions there, now returned, smiting their breasts in horror and remorse, reporting the words of the Centurion and others who had witnessed the end, “Certainly this was a righteous man,” “Truly this was the Son of God,” a deep dejection fell on the city, a gloom of the spirit darker than that which had just before been filling their sky.

Sunset was approaching. After that they were bound to go out and cut the first fruits with festivity : —they had no heart for it now.

As the morrow would be the Sabbath, the hours from three till sunset were called “the preparation ;” being given to cooking and preparing their food for the holy day : sometimes the whole of Friday was called the day of preparation. The Jewish law also directed that the bodies of persons executed should be buried before sunset of the day of execution ; and those at Calvary must now be removed.

There were members of the Sanhedrim believing on Jesus ; but that horrible punishment of excommunication, decreed a year before, on any one who might confess him, and the rancorous spirit of that body, had kept them in a craven fear ; but two of their number now broke through this feeling ;—Joseph of Arimathea ; and also Nicodemus, who had, three years previously, come to Jesus by night. They had taken no part in the deliberations and the condemnation at the house of Caiaphas ; and the Sanhedrim had, probably, used the precaution to keep all doubtful persons from the councils on these occasions. Joseph had been, at heart, a disciple : and is spoken of as a good man and just, waiting for the kingdom of God : and although it would have been more creditable to him to have shown his discipleship earlier, we must remember that the heroic spirit of Christianity had not yet taken a decided form, except in the Lord himself ; and, also, how dark and cramped the minds of the Jews were, respecting the Messiah. The eleven themselves had all fled, when their Master was seized at Gethsemane.

Joseph now went boldly to Pilate, and asked that the body of Christ might be delivered up to him. The governor sent for the centurion having it in charge, to inquire whether death had taken place so soon ; and, being satisfied of this, gave orders that it should be given to the applicant ; who now, assisted by Nicodemus, took it from the cross. The former was a wealthy man, and possessor of a garden close to the place of crucifixion, having in it a new tomb, in which no one had ever yet been laid.* Thither they trans-

* It was an ancient custom for families to have burial places in their garden. See 2 Kings xxi, 18-26.

SCENES FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS.

the body of the Messiah ; having wrapped, in the clean linen of its shroud, a very large quantity of spices, (aloes and myrrh,*) which would absorb the juices, and keep it in preservation for embalmment when the Sabbath should have passed. They laid it thus in the new tomb, and rolled a very large stone against the mouth of the sepulchre.† The faithful women from Galilee, had never, through all this day, deserted their Lord : they had now followed the body to the sepulchre ; and when it had been removed from all human eyes, they still sat down opposite the spot, gazing there tearfully ; still faithful to him in death.‡

It was, however, only fidelity to the strong affection produced by the past ; for all hopes in them respecting Christ on this earth were now extinct. He had often spoken of his resurrection from the tomb on the third day ; but, what is now familiar to us, through history, was, at that time, to them an unknown future, with foretellings concerning it so strange and foreign to their ideas as to bring to the mind no comprehension of their meaning ; and all his followers had believed, when he foretold his rising again, that he spoke of the final resurrection at the end of the world. Nicodemus and Joseph had so little expectation of a near rising again that they had enveloped the body in spices, so as to preserve it for embalmment after their Sabbath ; these women themselves, when they afterwards came to the sepulchre, on the resurrection morning, had with them spices§ for the embalming ; and the eleven themselves, on

* John xix, 38-42.

† Matt. xxvii, 60.

‡ Luke xxiii, 55 ; Matt. xxvii, 61.

§ Luke xxiv, 1.

that third day, when they heard that he had arisen, treated the report as an idle tale.

So, at this time, in all the followers of the Messiah hope was dead, except what there might be in a far-distant day, when the end of all things should come. The world was a blank to those who had trusted in him as the Messiah that was to do so much for the nation and for himself, and, perhaps, for them. Crucified ; dead ; what was there to hope for now ? How longingly had friends, how tremblingly had enemies, all through that day, been in a half-expectation as of some miracle for his own deliverance ! but none had come. It was ended now : the closed sepulchre, and the huge stone* rolled against its mouth, seemed forever to shut out these watchers at the grave from all the hopes they had entertained. So they felt ; but affection still remained ; and they sat there, tearfully, by the sepulchre, as the sun went down, and the evening shadows began to gather around.

But they were startled soon by the martial tread of armed men, and by numerous irregular footsteps of others, advancing along the alleys of the garden. On they came ; and presently a company of soldiers filed up, and stood in array before the sepulchre ; while chief priests and Pharisees busied themselves to make sure that the body was still safe within the tomb.

Hatred had been more keenly observant of Christ's words than affection ; and was now more attentively revolving them ; and the fears of these rulers had pictured to them a possible surreptitious disposal of

* Mark xvi, 4.

the body ; and especially were they alarmed when they found that two of the Sanhedrim itself, one of them a man of large pecuniary resources,—were the leaders in taking the body from the cross, and depositing it in a sepulchre belonging to one of these now acknowledged disciples,—men of rank. They had hoped that in the death of Christ their troubles would cease ; but a worse one had suddenly started up. The body in the tomb and garden belonging to Joseph, now courageous, as he had just shown himself to be, in going to Pilate for it, and a man of means sufficient to enable him to hire men for any purpose ;—he and Nicodemus also able to give the protection of their rank to subordinates ; while in the Sanhedrim were others, also, secretly favorable ;—how easy, they thought, would it be, and under these circumstances—(judging others by themselves)—how likely, to steal the body away, and to start then the report of an actual resurrection ! So, when they heard the particulars of the burial, they hastened to Pilate.

“Sir,” they said, “we remember that the deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse than the first.”—Pilate answered curtly,

“Ye have a watch : go your way, make it as sure as ye can.”*

The Roman garrison in Antonia could easily fur-

* Matt. xxvii, 63-65. Pilate's words, Ἐχετε κουστωδίας, may mean either *ye have* or *have ye*, the word, Ἐχετε being both in the indicative present and imperative.

nish men, with officers to take command : * and, with this power from the Governor, they found themselves immediately provided with what they needed : and a sufficient guard,† with the Pharisees and chief priests in company, were quickly on their way to the sepulchre. The number of their watch was large, but these leaders were resolved that no precautions should be wanting ; and that all secret plottings by the disciples, or violence from any revulsion of feeling among the populace should be equally guarded against. They took care

* It is obvious, from Matt. xxviii, 12-15, that the guard was composed of Roman soldiers ; for, had they been Jewish watchmen from the temple there would have been no occasion to bribe them to secrecy, or to offer to stand between them and Pilate, if their unfaithfulness should reach his ears.

† Bishop Porteus, in his lectures on Matthew, gives sixty as the number of men composing this guard. He says : "The chief priests went to Pilate as soon as the sun was set on Friday, the day of the preparation and crucifixion ; for then began the following day or Saturday, as the Jews always began to reckon their day from the preceding evening. They had a guard as soon as they possibly could after the body was deposited in the sepulchre ; and one cannot help admiring the goodness of Providence in so disposing events, that the extreme anxiety of these men, to prevent collusion, should be the means of adding SIXTY *unexceptionable witnesses* (the number of the Roman soldiers on guard,) to the truth of the resurrection, and of establishing the reality of it beyond all power of contradiction." The writer of the present work united with a friend,—a professor in a theological seminary, himself a library in erudition,—in a search among numerous ancient folios and quartos for the Bishop's authority for stating so large a number ; and we both were surprised to find how little, on this subject, could be found among commentators and other writers. All that we could discover was a quotation in Poole's Synopsis, from Theophylact (10th century), *νοστωδία ἐξήκοντα ἔστι στρατιῶν, a guard consists of sixty soldiers.* The rulers would take care that, on this occasion, the guard should be a large one.

to see, at the sepulchre, that the body was yet there, safe ; and then, drawing a cord across the stone which filled the entrance, and sealing the ends of this cord with their seals to the rock on each side, they felt now satisfied, that, with the soldiers in addition stationed about the place, they had made all secure. They thought, as they retired from the garden to their homes, that they might now have rest.

But, with such remembrances as were theirs, men cannot calmly and quietly rest. Night came down silently over the city, stealing on so imperceptibly that it might seem as if trying, as it always does, to soothe, and to invite to quiet and repose ; but there was a seething of many feelings, all through Jerusalem, and through the country around, that was hostile to rest.

The rulers themselves felt that the day's acts had written up against them a terrible record, which they had, sometime or other, to meet. The excitement of the previous night and of the day was over, and they could now reflect : the strong tension on the nervous system was past, and left them exhausted. They sat down to think. Tired and worn as they were, many thoughts in them, enemies to peace were harassing them, and were to harass them forever. Conscience is never dead ; and it now asked them pertinaciously, whether their earnest zeal in all this was not masked revenge ? Why their night assemblage, if truth and justice only were required ? Why the suborning of witnesses ? Why their actual breaking through all the old rules for trial although preserving the forms ? Why their untiring persistence ? Why the forcing of things to this terrible end ? Was not all this

course a tacit acknowledgment in themselves that their cause was not good? that they were fighting against truth and right? Suppose that this wonderful being should be the Messiah after all? and should be their future judge? Whatever doubts there might be on that subject, there was one which had in it a terrible certainty; for, to gain their ends this day, they had humiliated themselves before the Roman governor, a Gentile, as they had never done before. Their own cry, "We have no king but Cæsar," was still ringing in their ears. It was to ring there forever. It had always been their proud boast before their countrymen and the world, that they did not, and would not, bow to the Roman yoke. Had they not bowed their necks, and themselves put the yoke on, this day, before Pilate and before the public? But far worse than that;—*they had forsworn God*. Their opposition to Rome had always been on the ground that God was their King, and that they could have no other. But the mad cry, "We have no king but Cæsar," was casting off God, and was swearing fealty to the bloody, despicable monster at Rome in place of Jehovah; was blasphemy; was shutting themselves out from God. And was not the very fact that they could be induced to do this, in that persecution to death, a proof that their cause was the devil's cause, and that they were only his dupes? So their consciences whispered, as they laid down to rest.

But they slept at last. Nature, wearied out and exhausted, gave way at length, and they slept, wrapped up in such dreams as proud men utterly humiliated, and men feeling that they had just publicly abjured God, and substituted for him the vilest of all earthly

tyrants, may have ; to wake again to a frightful consciousness on the morrow.

The night, settling down, found the disciples crushed in heart ; and with no consciousness of noble, heroic conduct as a relief. They knew, and felt, how pusillanimous their course had been. John only had possessed courage enough to stand near the cross, an acknowledged follower of Christ. Their hopes of earthly glory were now gone : their Master had met a felon's death ; they, themselves, might soon be seized by the same relentless Sanhedrim and dragged to punishment : what a vista had Christ's oft repeated predictions as to themselves opened to their view ! Yet their recollections of him were precious. Faithless as they had been ; one of them false ; they clung, with deep affection, to the memories of his kindnesses, his counsels, his gentleness in their mistakes and waywardness, his constant love to them ; and their affection to his memory still constituted a bond among themselves, saddened, dispirited, borne down by a consciousness of their baseness in deserting him in his hour of need ; humbled ; and, although unconsciously to themselves, having, in this humility and this feeling of self-accusation, and in their affection to the memory of Christ, the elements which would yet be worked into greatness of life. They slept at last,—worn out with long agitation ;—slept such a sleep as the sorrowing and despondent have.

As twilight spread over the vast throngs in the city and on the hills around, these talked uneasily and gloomily of what they had, that day, seen and heard. A great many of them remembered the crucified, as he had moved among their hills and valleys in Galilee

and Perea ; the crowds following and shouting their gratitude at his healings ; the whole world there glorifying God, for what their eyes beheld of his wonderful greatness and goodness. Some of these multitudes had cried Hosanna to him here at Jerusalem, only a few days before ; and they remembered how full their hearts had then been of admiration and love. They remembered his stopping, amid the joy of the shouting train, to weep over Jerusalem ; and his lamentation then, and on the following day, over the city. Many in their hearts' deep convictions still hailed him with Hosannas as the Messiah. But, if he were the Messiah, then what must be thought of their country's sin that day ! So they queried sadly and anxiously, as night sunk down upon them, and they retired to their rest.

The city and country slept ;—the rulers from the exhaustion of the previous night and day ; the disciples worn out with sorrow and self-reproach ; the people weighed down with gloomy thoughts. They slept ; and, penetrating with its fangs deeper and deeper in the nation's vitals, so as to hold, with a sure and unrelenting grasp ; and beginning already its devourings, to be continued till the life of that people should all be like a quivering nerve, wherever they might be found,—*was the doom intensified by that hideous prayer,*

“ HIS BLOOD BE ON US AND ON OUR CHILDREN.”

Jesus had prayed that they might be forgiven ; but forgiveness is not forced on those who do not ask for it themselves, and who persist in wrong ; and the Jews still insist on the justice of that condemnation.

That prayer has never yet been canceled.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE RESURRECTION.

THE hours passed heavily by, over those guards at the sepulchre ; and morning came, the Jewish Sabbath, with its long hours of entire rest ; only the most necessary duties of life being allowed on their holy day. But people through these hours rested uneasily ; for their thoughts were ever turning towards that body lying in the sepulchre, and to the events of the preceding day ; and many discussions now took place ; often renewed, always unsatisfactory ; sometimes greatly exciting, generally of a gloomy kind. Sunset came again at last, closing their wearisome Sabbath, to which day even the temple solemnities could give no relief ; for the voices of the multitude, even in their sacred melodies, were dulled by an undefined dread. For, had not a mysterious power, on the previous day, rent, from top to bottom the veil shutting the Holy of Holies from common eyes ?—a fact of portentous significance, especially combined as it was with the numerous other terrors and unnatural events. Even their Most Holy Place had not escaped.

The night settled down again on Jerusalem ; the moon, still near the full, and a mild light shed on every object ;—the city, the garden, the sepulchre, and the guards pacing back and forth in their watch in front of its sealed door. At the previous sunset

had been the beginning of the third day since the crucifixion; and twenty-four hours from that period would relieve the guard from this duty, and the Sanhedrim from their fears; for the specified time for his rising would then be past. The grave had not yet been invaded; the seals had not been broken; the guard were cautioned to particular vigilance in the short remaining time; though, indeed, scarcely was caution necessary; for the Roman discipline was the severest ever known, and was particularly and properly so respecting the *vigiliae* or watches at night.

Hour after hour passed on in quietude; the pleasant, mellow moonlight lying on the sleeping city, on the crests of Moriah and temple pinnacles, on battlemented walls and castles, on the garden, on the helmets, and breast-plates, and spears of the guards, giving a charm to the scene, heightened by the entire silence around, which was broken only by the pace of the watch in front of the tomb. It had got at last to be near morning; in a little while the dawn would begin to creep upward in the eastern sky.—

—Suddenly the earth shook, and the whole garden was illuminated by an unnatural light, so dazzling as almost to blind the beholder;—and the guards stood paralyzed and trembling at what they beheld. An angel was there; “his countenance like lightning, his raiment white as snow.” He had descended suddenly and was among them, in the overwhelming glory of the heavenly world, compared with which all earthly beauty in the scene around was blank and drear;—except the glory of the tomb, by which he now stood, and which reflected back the dazzling brightness from his face. The glare lighted up all

objects around, and made distinct to the eye everything which now occurred.

The angel rolled away the stone from the mouth of the tomb.

JESUS CAME FORTH ALIVE.

The resurrection had come.

There was no mistaking that form standing in the blaze of the heavenly light:—the hands and feet pierced by the nails of the crucifixion; the wounded side; the brow marked by the thorns; that majesty of countenance, each feature and mark clear and easily recognized; and all manifest to the returning senses of the guard.

Christ, the crucified unto death, was before them; and had come out from the sealed and carefully guarded tomb.

The guard recovered from their stupor of amazement and fear: it was in vain to contend with the supernatural, and with power such as was before their eyes: their work of guarding was, indeed, over, and it was manifest had all been in vain. No seal, no bars, the millions of the world to guard such a place and keep the dead there, would not have availed.

Early, on that morning, a hasty admission was demanded into the houses of some of the high priests; and these men were astonished to see several of the soldiers before them, agitated and still showing marks of alarm. They brought the news that Christ had risen, and described the circumstances attending his coming forth among the living, himself alive again.

The intelligence was astounding. The rulers had

provided against the surreptitious taking of the body by the disciples ; but here was an account, which, if it should spread abroad, would bring the whole Jewish people upon them in a tempest of excited and angry feeling, demanding punishment on the abettors of the crucifixion : and the numerous guard, which they had placed there in order to make sure that there should be no fabricated story of a resurrection, would now, every one of them, be evidence that a resurrection had actually occurred.

The danger of that terrible reaction among the vast multitudes was imminent ; and to prevent it, the guards must, at once, be bought over, if possible ; no matter what the cost might be. They were all quickly sent for ; and, in the mean time, swift messengers through the city brought the Sanhedrim together, to an exciting consultation about this amazing news. The soldiers were brought before them : and the ample pecuniary means at the command of the rulers were turned to account.

“ Say ye,”—this was the injunction—“ Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him and secure you.”

The soldiers knew that the same golden means could be made effectual with the governor likewise ; and consequently little danger would accrue to them ; so they took the bribe, and spread abroad the prescribed report,* which the Sanhedrim took care to have repeated by their special messengers sent out

* Matt. xxviii, 11-15.

for that purpose, through the city and country around.*'

The story was a bold one : for every person knew that the punishment to any Roman soldier sleeping on his post was death ; and these guards were circulating a report, which showed, on the face of it, a gross infidelity to their trust, and a clear violation of all military law ; and therefore stamped the authors of the story as unworthy of belief. Every one, too, would ask, how could it be possible for the number of persons necessary to such a stealing as this, to come and remove the heavy stone and carry away the body, without waking such sleepers by the noise which they must necessarily make ;—the guard being so numerous as it was ? But the report, though carrying such improbabilities on its front, had its intended effect upon many of the people, backed as it was by the emissaries of the Sanhedrim ; and took a permanent hold on the public mind.

But the Sanhedrim never dared to join issue with the apostles on this subject ; although, soon after this event, the latter were preaching the doctrine of the resurrection in Jerusalem itself, and making thousands of converts by this preaching. These eleven men, so timid lately, after they had undergone the wonderful change produced by the descent of the Holy Ghost on them on the day of Pentecost, preached boldly and publicly *the resurrection*, of which they offered themselves as evidence. Peter and John proclaimed this, at the temple, in Solomon's Porch, before the multitudes and priests :

* The authority for this last is Justin Martyr, a cotemporary with the apostle John.

charging on them that they “killed the Prince of Life, *whom God hath raised from the dead ; whereof we are witnesses.*”^{*} The rulers heard them, and were “grieved that they taught the people through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead ;” but although they laid hands on them and confined them till the next day, they dared not dispute the fact itself, and bring to issue the question, on which friends and enemies all saw that the whole fabric of their new religion was resting.† Why did they not, for consistency’s sake, and for their own cause, prosecute the disciples ; and have an official investigation before the Sanhedrim, if they had dared to do so ; especially now when their story of the stealing had the lie publicly given to it, in the very temple precincts, the apostles offering themselves as witnesses ? On the next day after this seizing of Peter and John, “the rulers and elders and Scribes, and Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest,” assembled ; and the two disciples, Peter and John, were brought out and placed before them, a determined and formidable assembly indeed. But there was no charge made there, of preaching falsehood ; simply the question asked ;

“By what power, or by what name, have ye done this ?” Peter replied to them, and in his reply reiterates,—

“Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead :” and the rulers dared not there dispute the fact of the resurrection. They only, after the apostles had been removed to give oppor-

^{*} Acts iii, 15.

† 1 Cor. xv, 14-17.

tunity for consultation, decided,—“ But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.”* and this was done ; but still there was no attempt to make any issue *on the question of the resurrection.*

Again, soon after this threat and charge to the apostles, a large number of the latter were in the temple preaching as before. They had been in prison, but were released by supernatural interposition : in the morning the prison door was found open and the room empty ; and the apostles were obeying the words of their delivering angel, “ Go stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” The multitudes were around them in this preaching, captivated by their words ; and the messengers of the Sanhedrim, sent to bring the teachers again before that body, had to do it without violence, lest the crowd should stone the messengers themselves. The Sanhedrim were almost humble in their appeal : “ Did we not straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name ? and behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.”

But there was no denial of the resurrection by these leaders, which, in every contest with the apostles, they felt must be conceded as an admitted fact.

* Acts iv, 17.

CHAPTER XLIV.

AFTER THE RESURRECTION.—THE ASCENSION.

THE hearts of the disciples and of the followers of Christ, had, through that Jewish Sabbath, been burdened with a heavy load. They had all mistaken his prediction concerning his rising again ; a circumstance that seems strange to us, looking as we do, at this event through the light of history : but to their minds it was a truth too great to be fully comprehended, and was mingled with visions of a general resurrection at the end of the world. Any dim idea that they might have received from the plainness of his words, was swept away by the horrors at Calvary, where their Master seemed to have been deserted of God and man.

Consequently, on this night, they had not been watching ; but Christ's enemies, for other purposes, had watched. They did not see the glory of the resurrection ; but strangers did. They were left to sleep ; though the Lord had risen from the dead.

The assembling of the Sanhedrim and the calling of the matter before that council, had all been very early ; for, when some women came to the sepulchre, at dawn,* they found no one there. On the way, these followers of Christ had been querying how they

* Matthew says, "as it began to dawn ;" Mark, "very early;" "at the rising of the sun;" Luke, "very early;" John, "when it was yet dark." For such metonymy of sun-light, see Judges ix, 33 : Ps. civ, 12 : 2 Kings iii, 22.

should get the great stone removed from the entrance ; for they were bringing spices, with the intention of having the body embalmed. No thought in them of his rising again, as the object of their errand very clearly proved.

These women were the ones who had, at the crucifixion, stood watching the scene ; some near, some further off ; and who had, afterward, followed the body to the tomb ; Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James,* and other followers from Galilee.

They came into the garden with their burden of spices. They found that the stone had been rolled away : the tomb was open ! They ran to look in : it was empty !

Amazement was their first feeling ; then alarm. "Who had taken the body ? For what purpose ? Where was it ? There had been such a hate shown by the ruling powers during the last three days, that nothing was too dark for them, no act that they might not perpetrate ;—or had friends taken the body from some mistaken motive ?" Thought, at such moments, is far quicker than words, and these queries were flashing through their minds, 'only however creating perplexities. Mary Magdalene, having given a glance to assure herself that the sepulchre was empty ; turned and ran back to the city, to where Peter and John were lodging there ; whom, on reaching their house, she saluted with the lamentation,

"They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

* Luke xxiv, 10.

These two disciples started immediately for the tomb.*

In the mean time, the women left behind had entered the sepulchre. Two men suddenly appeared now beside them,—angelic messengers they were quickly seen to be ;—and the women, trembling with fear, bowed down their faces before them.†

One of the angels said, " Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here : for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead ; and behold he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him : lo, I have told you."‡

They hurried off, trembling still at the thought of what they had just seen and heard, but filled with an extatic joy. What glorious tidings were these of which they were the messengers ! *Risen ; alive again ; soon to meet them once more ; they should see him again, now far more glorious and more wonderful even than before !* They stopped not ; but were hurrying back to the city, full of eagerness to communicate the news, when, on the way, they met the Saviour himself !

He stood before them ! What was he like ? The same to all outward senses as previously, except that he now bore, in his hands and feet, the marks never, never, we may believe, in the glorified body to be erased ;—the marks from that sacrifice of himself made for the redemption of the world.

* John xx, 1-3.

† Luke xxiv, 4, 5.

‡ Matthew xxviii, 5-7. Matthew and Mark speak of one angel ; Luke of two. The same criticism applies here as in a former case, *Qui plura narrat pauciora complectitur*.

They knew him, at once, and at his salutation, "All hail!" they fell at his feet, embracing them, and worshipping him. He said, "Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

He left them; and, hurrying on their mission, they soon reached the house where all, except Peter and John, were staying; but here they received a terrible check to their eagerness and joy. The disciples treated their story as an idle tale!*

The nine listened to their earnest words, which were almost incoherent through their haste and agitation; looked at them; saw how they trembled still from excitement, and how pale their looks; heard their confused voices in the earnestness of their asseverations, the tones of joy, and earnestness, and disappointment intermixed: and concluded that some strange phantom in their confused senses had bewildered them. The disciples were never disposed to credulity; and, throughout this day, they showed an amount of the opposite feeling which seems strange to us with our present means of judging of these things. But the resurrection was, to them, a new thought: even to us now it is an amazing one, though familiar to our minds. They had been weeping† at their loss: the other feeling was too great a joy to suddenly find admittance amid such gloom.

Peter and John, on the report of Mary Magdalene, had started from their home in another part of the city; and John's warm affection brought him the first to the sepulchre; where he stooped and looked reverently in, not venturing to enter. Peter, arriving

* Luke xxiv, 11.

† Mark xvi, 10.

soon, had greater boldness, and went in ; and John also entered now. The empty tomb betrayed no signs of a rapid and confused departure ; for the linen clothes used for enveloping the body were folded, and the napkin for the head had been wrapped up and laid by itself.* They queried, as they stood there,—now joined by Mary Magdalene, who had followed them,—and were perplexed by what they saw. Thieves had not taken the body, for the spices were there, and, in that case, would not have been left behind ; friends had not done it, for they would have taken the grave-clothes also. No account of a resurrection had yet reached these two, and “they knew not the Scripture” about his rising.† Their eyes confirmed what they had heard concerning the removal of the body ; but the rest was still to them a dark perplexing mystery. They returned to the city, leaving Mary Magdalene still at the tomb.

She was left there alone, weeping, outside the sepulchre ; but presently stooping down, she looked in to see the spot where the body had just been lying. She was startled at seeing two angels sitting there, one at each end of the tomb ; the heavenly visitants, their robes of white, and their meditative posture, harmonizing with the sacred place. They addressed her :

“Woman, why weepest thou ?”

“Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him,” was the reply ; her simple language evidence of the full strength of her grief.

She turned as she said this ;—some other person was

* John xx, 4-7.

† Id. verses 9, 10.

standing near her ; but her eyes,—holden, as was afterwards the case with the two disciples going to Emmaus, or overflowing with grief,—failed to recognize who it was. A voice, also unrecognized, said,

“ Woman, why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ? ” Her mind was full of the one thought, of the abstraction of the body ; and, seemingly with scarcely a glance at the questioner, whom she supposed to be the gardener, she replied,

“ Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

There was but one word in reply to this ; but it was in that tone so well known to her—

“ Mary ! ”—She turned :—

“ Rabboni ! ” (Master ;) and she fell at his feet.—It was Jesus himself.

Her joy, and love, and reverence were making demonstration in the act of worship, as she lay there, her heart overflowing with gladness. Alive ! restored to them ! The marks in the feet showed that it was no phantom, but the same ! Not a spirit, but himself ! In her reverence and joy, she would have clung to these feet, and would have been willing to lie there in her deep happiness ; but there was not time for such demonstrations now. He said,

“ Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father ; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God, and your God.”*

She went to deliver the message ; her soul all full of gladness, and of that one thought that the Lord was among them again, living, speaking ; that face,

* John xx, 11-17.

so grand always, glorious still in its benignity and kindness ; that voice, still full of its old intonations of mercy and goodness : Jesus was alive again ! her thoughts gave swiftness to her movements ; and she was soon before the apostles in their city home. But the manner in which they received her message grated on all her sensibilities. They refused to believe that it could be so ;* the very enthusiasm of her feelings was to them a proof that an excited imagination had deceived her. The announcement, they thought, was too astounding to be believed : they wanted the evidence of their own senses ; indeed, they argued, could they even then believe ?

Our knowledge of the Saviour, after his resurrection, is but fragmentary. In the history of the gospels he comes before us suddenly, and without preparation of circumstances ; and then disappears ; to be revealed again, without explanation or cause given : his earthly ministrations always so mysterious to us, must indeed be doubly so to mortals in that space lying between earth and heaven : the interval between the resurrection and his ascension.

At this place, however, the inquiry may suggest itself to the reader, what was the nature of the body in which he now appeared ? There have been three opinions started by learned and good men : 1st—That it was a spiritual body, such as the dead shall have after the resurrection ;† 2d—That it was the same body as before, but glorified, or as the earlier writers express it, changed in its qualities and attributes : and 3d—That it was the same body as before, but which was to be spiritualized and glorified at the

* Mark xvi, 9-11.

† 1 Cor. xv, 43, 44.

ascension. It will be best only to remark here, that the last of these opinions seems to be the correct one. The body of Elijah was also spiritualized at the moment of its ascension from the earth. As respects the sudden transportation from place to place, or a sudden appearance or disappearance, all difficulties in any of the above views cease in comparison with the resurrection itself. We are among the supernatural agencies ; and admitting the power of the resurrection, we must admit power for the rest.

Christ thought it best to remain, after the resurrection, forty days* on earth. It was important to give full proof of his having risen again ; not only immediately after that event, but at different times and places ; and those occasions, also, at periods when men's minds would be recovered from the first surprise, and a cooler judgment be exercising itself. It was important also that the disciples, whose mission was to be so extensive and dangerous, should not have a feeling of sudden and entire desertion ; but should have a sense of a nearness to them, a care and affectionate regard, all open to their outward senses, and giving an assurance to their mind and heart that their Lord had not forsaken them, would not forsake them, in this new relative condition between him and themselves. Being with them, as he was for forty days ; not continuously, in which case familiarity might have lessened reverence ; but at intervals, and under circumstances to give assurance of his identity, his deep affection, and his continued supernatural powers, and also, with these powers, of a greatness in his Presence

more wonderful even than before, he could thus make them have a fulness of faith in his final parting words—"Behold I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." They would, indeed, need the consciousness of that presence in many a scene of their after life,—the arena with the wild beasts ready to tear them to pieces, and the rage of men more savage than beasts;—and they could have it all the stronger, from the feeling that he had, in his affection, lingered with them these forty days, to afford them proof of his care and attachment in his new state, and to give words of kindness and love, uttered in their ears,—manifestations of his closeness with them which they could fully understand. With such a feeling, not of forsakenness, but of *the Presence* derived from the forty days, and the demonstration to their senses that they were not, and to their hearts that they never could be, forsaken, they could go forth into the world, as they did, to meet all its rage, and amid that rage to persevere.

On this day of the resurrection, two disciples were going to Emmaus, a village seven and a half miles from Jerusalem; and were talking sadly as they went, about what they had recently seen and heard. They were joined on the way by the Saviour himself, who inquired the cause of their sadness and the subject of their conversation. "Their eyes were *holden* that they should not know him."* One of them asked him in surprise,—

"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass in these days?" And, in answer to his question, they spoke of

the Messiah as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and the people," and gave a statement of the trial and crucifixion. "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel;" and they added that they had been astonished by the reports of the women: and that the sepulchre was certainly empty, as some of their own number had seen. He said, in reply:

"O unintelligent and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:" and he proceeded then to explain the prophecies relating to himself.

Coming to the village, he was invited to go with them to their home: where, then, at table, assuming the office of host, instead of guest, he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them to eat. They knew him now, for the restriction was taken from their sight: but he vanished, as they became aware who he was. They said,

"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

They returned to the city immediately, and hastened to the room where the apostles (except Thomas,*) with others, were assembled;—the doors carefully closed through fear of their Jewish enemies;†—but, as they entered, full of the joyful news, they were met, at once, by the no less joyful annunciation that he had appeared to Peter that day.‡ These two described

* Luke calls them "the eleven," (though Thomas was absent,) just as Paul in 1 Cor. xv, 5, says "he was seen of the twelve," though Judas was then dead.

† John xx, 19.

‡ Luke xxiv, 341; Cor. xv, 5. The circumstances of this appearing are no where described.

their meeting with him ; but, while they were yet speaking, Christ himself stood in the midst of the assembly, with the salutation,

“Peace be unto you.”

The suddenness of his appearance overcame all who were present. How could any but a spirit enter through that closed door, and stand so suddenly in their midst ? They shrunk terrified from before so dreaded an object, a spirit of unknown nature, as he seemed to them to be ; but he hastened to re-assure them.

“Why are ye troubled ? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself ; handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have :” and he showed them his hands and feet.

There was a whirl of sensations in their hearts ; a joy that longed to be full,—for it was mixed with doubts ;—a belief struggling for ascendancy—and yet the truth seemed to be too great for belief ; hope, mixed with doubts ; love, that longed to clasp the feet of the Master, and yet fear ; a full recognition of the features with their grand and gentle, and now pitying expression ;—and yet how could it be that he was the same ? The crucified, the dead, how could it be ?

—How different from this doubtfulness, in the strong yet shrinking natures of these men, was the quick and full belief of the weaker, and yet more courageous because more loving, natures of the women, as shown that day !—

The company had been at supper, when he entered. To assure them fully he asked for meat, and he ate

before them ; and afterwards he gave explanations of the prophecies, and counsel respecting themselves after he should have left the earth ;* and also a symbol of the future descent of the Holy Ghost on them, after which they would have the power of knowing hearts, and of forgiving sins.†

Eight days subsequently he showed himself again to the disciples in their room in Jerusalem, Thomas, on this occasion, being present ; and to this doubter, who had openly expressed his requirements of clearer demonstrations before he would believe, he gave tangible evidences of his identity.—

“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless, but believe.” Thomas exclaimed on this—

“My Lord and my God !” The Saviour replied,

“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.”‡

There was to be a great occasion in Galilee, to which the Saviour, in the meeting with the women on the morning of his resurrection, had adverted ; and whither they were told to direct the disciples to proceed. Galilee had always been the favored region : and here, accordingly, the number of disciples was greatest ; while also in Galilee the Messiah must have found, to the last, much that was genial to himself. We never read of that country, its scenery or its people, and especially of Christ’s actions there, without having pleasant thoughts rise up in our minds.

* Luke xxiv, 36-39.

† John xx, 22.

‡ John xx, 26-29.

Not only was Galilee not neglected by the Saviour after the resurrection, but there was to be in that region the most impressive manifestation of himself, and to the largest number ; and, there also, the grand commission to preach the Gospel *to all the world*.

First, however, there was a more private interview with his disciples on the borders of its lake. Some of them had again resorted to their former means of livelihood ; and, while they were employed in fishing, the Saviour appeared on the shore, and invited them to a meal already there prepared. They were Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John, with two others not specified by name.

Could Peter ever see the Saviour, now, without thinking of the scene in the house of Caiaphas, and of his own sin and shame ? The dawn after that night had beheld him in the streets bowed down with remorse, and convulsed with grief ; but no tears, and no remorse, could ever efface from his memory the terrible sin of that denial of his Lord. But his bitter repentance had brought forgiveness. The Saviour had, through all that sin, seen a warm-hearted, generous nature, whose very impulsiveness might, under the great influences of the Spirit, yet bring out the grandest results. Christ pitied the weak, and loved the good, that he saw in him.

On this occasion he must have shrunk from his Lord almost with a hatred of himself ; ashamed to look into the face still so winning in its expressions, with such gentleness and kindness still mixed with its grandeur. After the meal, the Saviour, as if to lift up this fallen disciple from that despairing consciousness of his de-

gradation, and to reinstate the penitent in the eyes of his companions, turned to him especially :—

“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than [thou dost] these ?”

He used the word ἀγαπᾶς (*agapas*), which signifies a *strict union of affection, a feeling of strong love* ; and Peter, on hearing it, seems to have shrunk into a horror at his unworthiness to respond in the same expressive terms. There is another word, φιλῶ (*philo*), signifying an affection of less endearment, a warm friendship ; and the convicted and now modest, though still a *rdent* disciple, resorted to it. He answered, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that φιλῶ σε (*philo se*) I have affection for thee.” “Feed my lambs,” was now the injunction of Christ, by which Peter was publicly reinstated in his apostleship.

But there was such a hiatus between the Saviour’s expressive word and that of the apostle, that Christ, wishing, in his great tenderness and kindness, to place the fallen man, even in the language of his regard, on the same level as the others, tried to draw him to it ; and he asked once more,

“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me (*agapas me*) ?”

“Yea, Lord,” said the remorseful man again, φιλῶ σε (*philo se*), I have affection for thee.”

“Be a shepherd to my sheep,” was the injunction now.

Christ then, as if to put himself on a level with the disciple, and thus enwrap him in his heavenly regards, to be carried in them upward, used the same term as that of Peter, and said,

“Simon, son of Jonas, φιλεῖς (*phileis*) me ? Hast thou affection for me ?”

The disciple, grieved because he asked him this third time, *phileis me* ? answered warmly,

“Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest *philo se*, I have affection for thee.” Christ gave the injunction,

“Feed my sheep.”

What a history of Peter’s heart there is manifesting itself in this dialogue ;—the long remorse, the prostration from his former confidence in himself ; affection, ardent yet all enveloped in shame ; days and nights of mourning ; a heart now chastened by his grief !

What a tenderness and depth of love in Christ is also here made manifest !

The Saviour addressed some further remarks to him, signifying the trials before him, and what death he should die ; adding, then, to him, “Follow me.”*

Peter turned and saw John close by. The affectionate, gentle, brave man, and the rash, impetuous, but really timid one, had, by the magnetism of opposites, which we often see in life, formed a mutual attachment ; and Peter said, in his old, impulsive manner,

“Lord, and what shall this man do ?”

“If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou me.”† and these words being mis-

* John xxi, 15-19. The author has in this, endeavored to give the force of the original, though regretting to mar, in doing so, the simplicity of the dialogue. In our common translation it loses its meaning and force. The first and last of Christ’s injunctions are *βόσκει*, feed ; the second one is *ποιμαίνε*, be a shepherd. See Bloomfield and Alford *in loco*. In this dialogue the vernacular of the country (Aramean) was of course employed ; but it is doubtless faithfully rendered in the Greek given as above, by St. John xxi, 15-17.

† John xxi, 15-23.

taken, a report was spread, from that time, that John was not to die, confirmed seemingly for a while, in after periods, by the very advanced age to which that apostle lived.

The mountains of Galilee had ever been the favorite resort of Christ ; and through all that region he had left the chief marks of his goodness and love, and of his divine power ; and therefore we might have expected here something peculiar in these last manifestations of himself. It was so. He had directed the eleven to meet him here ; on this occasion, doubtless, we must place the meeting with the five hundred brethren, alluded to in another part of the Scriptures.* Here was the great mission for an universal Gospel given to his followers. Some of those present at this meeting doubted their own senses, so amazing was the fact of the resurrection ; but others worshiped, their hearts full of mingled sentiments, awe, reverence, wonder, tenderness, and deep and clinging love. For there were in him the marks of the wounds at Calvary ; and all remembered his words about the meaning of the sacrifice of himself there made.

Standing among them, on the mountain-top, where they had met, he said :

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.†

* 1 Cor. xv, 6.

† Matt. xxviii, 16-20.

The eleven then returned to Jerusalem ; and he met them, now, on the Mount of Olives, and went with them along on the road to Bethany, by spots to them full of recollections of recent, stirring events. Was it the memory of the late triumphal passage across that mountain, and the loud *Hallels* of the people, which started the query,

“ Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom of Israel ? ”

It was indeed necessary that these men, so persistent in the old Jewish errors, should have supernatural enlightenment before going on their wide mission to the world ; and he now again promised it to them. He directed them to remain at Jerusalem till it should come. “ For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

The party were now approaching Bethany. He knew that in a few minutes that last separation would take place. In his presence they had felt confidence, strength, comfort. Very soon they would be left ; and what a fight there was before them in the world ! and what a duty to be performed ! But they were to be strengthened for it, as, indeed, all men are for duty. He said to them, “ Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

He lifted up his hands and blessed them.—They must have trembled at the significance of the act.—There might well be a rush of all tender emotions as he ended, *for they were losing him*. He was as-

ending—floating upward, as if heaven were drawing its own to itself. It was at a season when the sky of Palestine is usually cloudless; but as the disciples gazed, a cloud formed, and gathered around him, and shut him from their sight.

Two angels stood beside them. "Ye men of Galilee," they said, "why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall come again in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*

He will appear again, but it will be in the majesty of the Judgment Day.

CHAPTER XLV.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"What think ye of Christ?" It was a question once put by him to his disciples; and we put it here, now, to ourselves.

We have been endeavoring, in this work, to bring fully to our minds the scenes of his earthly ministry; but there was still a part of his being which we could not reach, and which we could only glance at in these pages; feeling, in the mean time, how grand and glorious was that which was beyond our sight.

But what we did see was wonderful. We say, as we follow Jesus in all the phases of his life here,

* See Luke xxiv. 50-53; Acts ii, 4-11.

Never could such a character have been invented by man. It must have been real, for it could not otherwise have been portrayed. It rises so high in its grandeur of outline (so far as we can trace it), as to be far beyond any previous human conception ;—to be lost to us in the infinities, such as belong to God : while also its influence reaches our minutest thoughts and actions in an operative, practical form. It is God infinitely extended ; and yet God with us, in our heart and life.

We have, in these pages, seen him common among men, yet perfect ; subject to our infirmities, yet sinless ; in actual power elevated above all around him, holding nature's laws in his grasp, yet bearing himself in quietude of manner ; insulted, subjected to violence, treated with bitterest scorn, yet, in it all, only becoming the more sublime and Godlike, by forgiveness, and tenderness, and mercy.

His teachings have been, ever since they were uttered, like a purifying healthful atmosphere, sweeping moral pestilence and death before them, wherever they have gone. At the same time he was the Example as well as Teacher, however impossible, when we consider his Godhead, this might have appeared. "The first shall be last," he said ; and he, the God, became so ; even in lowest humiliations, and lowest services to men. He wins our hearts by showing himself humble as the humblest can be : taking our affections, he carries them up toward heaven, to be there imbued with the grandeur of his own infinities.

We cannot compare him with others, whether as teacher or example ; for he stands all alone in the

world, incomparably beyond all else that the world has seen. He fills our sight as we gaze, and we feel that there is nothing else ; and that we want nothing else. The infinities of our soul, both in intellect and emotion, all are satisfied in him. Our need for the practical is satisfied ; our aspirations after the ideal are satisfied. Sinners that we are ;—he is sufficient : when we are bowed down with guilt, he lifts us up : most unworthy as we feel ourselves to be, we know that he loves us still : our hearts, made to love the true, the good, the great, find all they can need ready for them in him : our souls want a God, whom we can altogether love, and whom, at the same time, we may worship as the infinite, and they have it all in him : in our present fleeting state we long for the eternal, and yet do not wish it, unless, with it, may be that affection which gives life to our souls here, which only grows stronger with time and more beautiful by experience, and which, strongest of all feelings and most expansive, wants infinities for its object ; towards Christ we may let all our love pour out, now and forever ; for he is worthy, and hath first loved us with an infinite love.

Such is Christ.

We have been reading of his miracles, and have wondered : and they are so amazing that people also sometimes doubt. But there is a miracle now actually before our eyes, which no one can doubt, and which must be convincing. It is a far greater miracle than any which he performed on earth. It is the miracle of himself as portrayed in the Scriptures. Amid all incredulity and every disposition to scepticism, still no one can doubt that we have, in the New Testa-

ment, a character delineated, which, as a mere delineation, is beyond all ever thought of before, and all else imagined since. Regarded fully, it is itself a miracle beyond anything described in the Gospels; and it is now clearly before our minds and open to our apprehension. Theodore Parker says of Christ, "Try him as we try other teachers. They deliver their word, find a few waiting for the consolation, who accept the new tidings, follow the new method, and soon go beyond their teacher, though less mighty minds than he. Though humble men, we see what Socrates and Luther never saw. But eighteen centuries have passed, since the Sun of humanity rose so high in Jesus; what man, what sect has mastered his thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to his life?"*

If, with our present enlightenment and our vast means for knowledge, we feel that this character of Christ rises so high above all that can be conceived of by human beings, how much more must this have been the case in those ancient times of darkness and superstition? Who in heathen lands could have invented such an ideal as this? Who in Judea? Especially, who among the unlettered men who wrote those Gospels?

The reader, while perusing these pages, may, perhaps, have sometimes felt in his mind the query, how do I know that those four books were actually written by the men whose names they bear? Although, even if they were not written by them, still the undeniable miracle of such a character would remain, for the fact of its delineation is before us, and must have

* Discourses of Religion, p. 303.

had its origin somewhere ; yet, as it may be satisfactory to know the evidence for the authorship claimed, we give here the chain of proofs,—for our space will allow only of this—showing with what confidence our minds, on this subject, may feel at rest.

We begin with men hostile to Christianity, tracing the evidence backward, from the times when this religion was fully engrafted on national forms and institutions, and became a part of the world's widest histories.

Julian (surnamed the Apostate, A. D. 331–363,) wrote against Christianity ; he referred to the genealogies of Matthew and Luke by name, and recited the sayings of Christ in the very words of the Scriptures. He also bore testimony to the Gospel of John being composed at a time when great numbers in Greece and Italy had been converted to the Christian faith. He admitted the miracles of Christ.

Porphyry wrote (about A. D. 270) a work against Christianity. His learning was extensive. His writings contain references to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John. He did not deny the truth of the Gospel history, and conceded the miracles of Christ as real facts.

The Talmuds (about A. D. 230 ; see *ante*, p. 90) refer to the nativity of Christ, and his journey into Egypt, and agree that he performed numerous miracles, which they ascribed to his having acquired the *Shemmaphoresh*, or the ineffable name of God, which they say he clandestinely stole out of the temple : or they impute his power to magic arts.

Celsus flourished A. D. 176, or about seventy-six

years after the death of Saint John. His works have about eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament or references to them. "Among these there is abundant evidence that he was acquainted with the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John. His whole argument proceeds upon the concession that the Christian Scriptures were the works of the authors to whom they are ascribed. Such a thing as a suspicion to the contrary is not breathed; and yet no man ever wrote against Christianity with greater virulence."*

The *younger Pliny*, in a letter to Trajan, written A. D. 107, (or seventy-four years after the crucifixion,) from Bythinia, where he was pro-consul, says: "For this superstition is spread like a contagion, not only into cities and towns, but into country villages also;" and "that there are many, of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes," adhering to it. He put many to torture, and could learn from them, only "that they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a god, alternately; and to oblige themselves by a sacrament [or oath] not to do anything that was ill; but that they would commit no theft, or pilfering, or adultery; that they would not break their promise, or deny what was deposited with them, when it was required back again; after which it was their custom to depart, and to meet again at a common but innocent meal,"† probably their feast of charity. It may be as well to quote his account of the manner of treating those brought before him: "I asked them

* McIlvain's Lectures.

† Quoted from his letter to the Emperor.

whether they were Christians or not? If they confessed that they were Christians, I asked them again, and a third time, intermixing threatening with the questions. If they persevered in their confession, I ordered them to be executed; for I did not doubt but, let their confession be of any sort whatsoever, this positiveness and inflexible obstinacy deserved to be punished." The Christians had already become so numerous in Bythinia, (a region bordering northwardly on the Black Sea and Sea of Marmora,) that, as this letter says, the heathen temples had been almost forsaken, and "few purchasers for the sacrifices had of late appeared."*

Tacitus, who wrote about the same time as *Pliny*, speaking of the Christians, says: "The name was derived from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius suffered under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea. By that event, the sect of which he is the founder, received a blow which for a time checked the growth of a dangerous superstition; but it revived soon after and spread with recruited vigor, not only in Judea, the soil that gave it birth, but even in the city of Rome;"† and he then describes the persecutions of the Christians under Nero (thirty-one years after the death of Christ,) in a manner which shows that they must then have been very numerous in that city.

We may perhaps be allowed to add,

Josephus, (born A. D. 37, perhaps not hostile, but indifferent.) He says, "Now there was, at this time, [government of Pilate,] Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with plea-

* Epist. Lib. x, ch. 97.

† Annal. Lib. xv, § 44.

sure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. This was the Christ ;" and Josephus then speaks of his crucifixion and resurrection ; and of the sect of Christians subsisting to the writer's time, (*Antiq.* xxiii, 3, § 3.) The passage has such force that opposers have, "contrary to all evidence, affirmed it to be spurious." (See Horne's "Introduction.")

We proceed now to Christian writers, of whom we have an unbroken series, extending back into the times of the apostles themselves : *Jerome*, (about A. D. 378,) who wrote many works, and whose catalogue of the New Testament Scriptures, is exactly like our own : *Origen*, (A. D. 185 to 253,) bears testimony to the authenticity of the New Testament as we now have it : his pupils, *Gregory*, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, and *Dionysius*, bishop of Alexandria, did the same : *Cyprian*, a martyr, (A. D. 258,) quotes largely from our sacred books : *Tertullian* (A. D. 160–220,) recognizes the four Gospels, as written by the Evangelists to whom we ascribe them, and has large extracts from their works : *Clement of Alexandria*, preceptor of Origen, quotes largely from most of the books of the New Testament : *Athenagoras* (A. D. 180,) indisputably quotes from Matthew and John : *Irenæus* (A. D. 170,) wrote treatises from which we learn that he received as authentic and canonical Scripture the four Gospels, the authors of which he describes, and the occasions on which they were written : *Melito*, bishop of Sardis, *Hegesippus*, and *Tatian*, all of about the same period, have left us similar testimony : *Justin*, (born about 89, suffered martyrdom about 164,) who studied first the Grecian philos-

ophies, and then embraced Christianity; has left us numerous quotations from the four Gospels, which he uniformly represents as containing the genuine and authentic accounts of Jesus Christ and of his doctrine ; and says that he was read and expounded in the Christian assemblies for public worship : *Papias*, bishop of Hierapolis (about A. D. 110,) bears express testimony to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, which he ascribes to these evangelists : *Polycarp*, an immediate disciple of St. John and bishop of Smyrna, (suffered martyrdom about A. D. 166,) has, in the very small portion of his writings now remaining, about forty allusions to the different books of the New Testament : *Ignatius* (bishop of Antioch, A. D. 70, suffered martyrdom about 110,) distinctly quotes the epistles of Matthew and Mark, and cites, or alludes to, the Acts and most of the Epistles : *Hermas*, cotemporary with St. Paul, (see Epistle to the Romans xvi. 14,) has left a work in three books, which contains numerous allusions to the New Testament : *Clement*, bishop of Rome, and fellow-laborer of Paul, (see Philippians iv, 3,) wrote an epistle, several passages in which exhibit the words of Christ as they stand in the Gospels, and cites most of the Epistles : *Barnabas*, fellow-laborer with Paul, (Acts xiii, 2, 3, &c.) is the author of an epistle still extant, in which are expressions identically the same as some occurring in the Gospel of Matthew, and one in particular which is introduced with the formula *it is written*, which was used by the Jews when they cited their sacred books. He quotes mostly from the Old Testament, as he was arguing chiefly with Jews. But his epistle contains the exact words of several texts in the New Testament, in addition to

those noticed above, and allusions to some others, with many phrases used by the Apostle Paul.

In the writings of these last five, (called the Apostolic Fathers, because cotemporary with the apostles,) although they are often only fragmentary, there is scarcely a book of the New Testament which one or other of them has not quoted or referred to ; and they uniformly speak of them as " Scriptures," " Sacred Scripture," and as the " Oracles of God."

We have thus an unbroken chain of testimony, running up to the apostolic period, showing that the Gospels and other books of the New Testament were written at the time, and by the persons, when and by whom they profess to have been composed.

And now, holding by this testimony, there stands out before us, again, the miracle of Christ himself in the world ; such a character, such a teacher, such a being as those Gospels exhibit to us ; not a myth, not an ideal, not an abstraction, but a reality, living, acting, suffering, dying, and yet perfect and sinless, and giving us doctrines such as might be let down from the highest place in heaven itself.

We quote here from Mr. Parker again : " Measure," he says, " the religious doctrine of Jesus by that of the time and place he lived in, or that of any time or any place ; yes, by the doctrine of eternity. Consider what a work his words and deeds have wrought in the world. Remember that the greatest minds have seen no farther, and added nothing to the doctrine of religion ; that the richest hearts have felt no deeper, and added nothing to the sentiment of religion ; have set no loftier aim, no truer method than his, of perfect love to God and man. Measure

him by the shadow he has cast into the world—no, by the light he has shed upon it. Shall we be told such a man never lived? the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived. But who did their wonders, and thought their thoughts? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could forge a Jesus? None but a Jesus.”*

Of similar import is a passage in the writings of J. J. Rousseau: “Shall we suppose the evangelical history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which no body presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it. It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that only one should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish writers were incapable of the diction and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.”

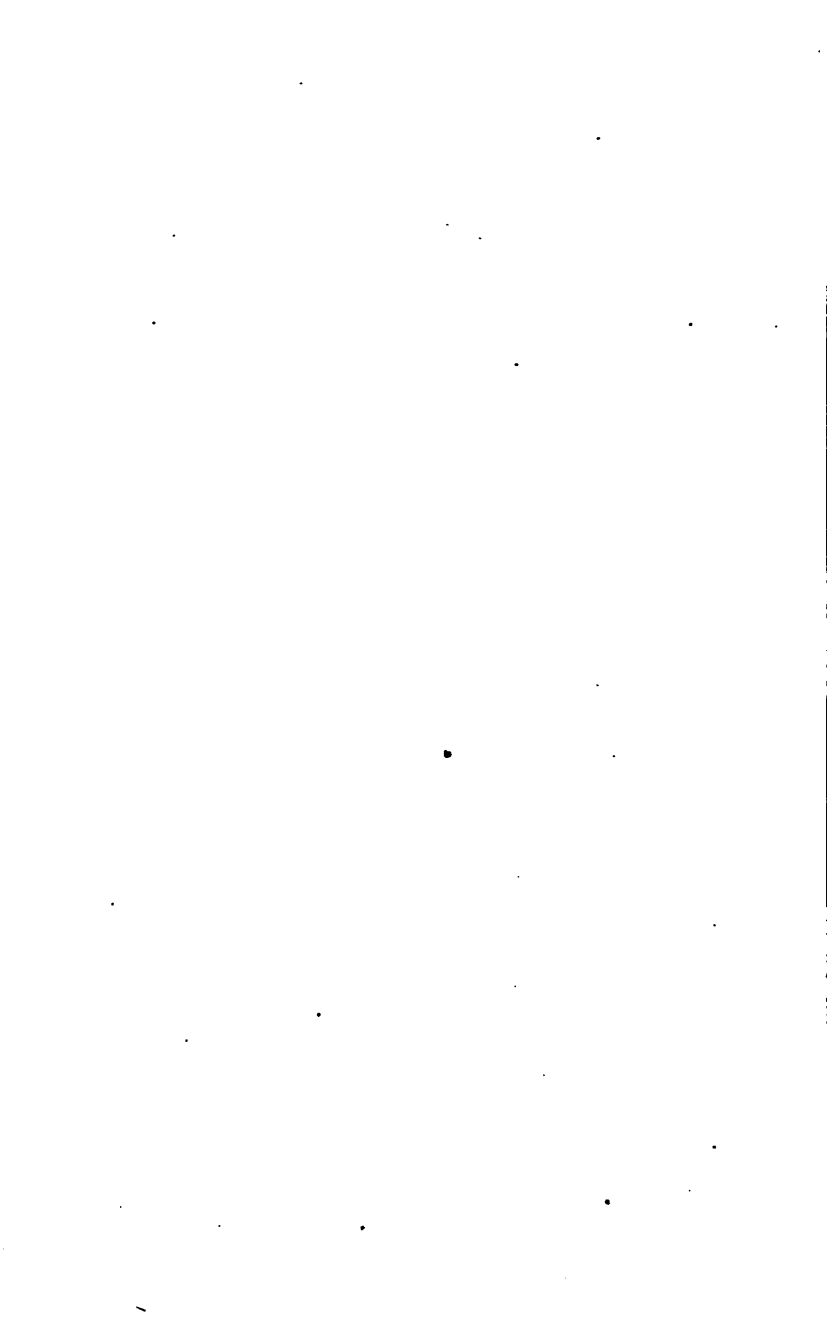
What shall we say, then, in answer to the question, “What think ye of Christ?” His own character before us, as the greatest of possible miracles; his teachings, felt by all the world to be like the breath of heaven on its wretchedness and guilt; his example perfect, and yet with a perfection that does not repel, but attracts us; his love to us so great that, when the majesty of God’s unchangeable law over the universe was about to pour vengeance on us the guilty, that love brought him to earth as the sacri-

* “Life of Jesus,” p. 363.

face, that "with his stripes we might be healed," and that "on him might be laid the iniquity of us all :"—this is the Christ and God, trying to draw us to himself. In reply to the question, we bow in faith, and gratitude, and adoration, and love, exclaiming in the words of one of the Apostles; "My Lord and my God!"

* Isaiah liii, 5, 6.

THE END.



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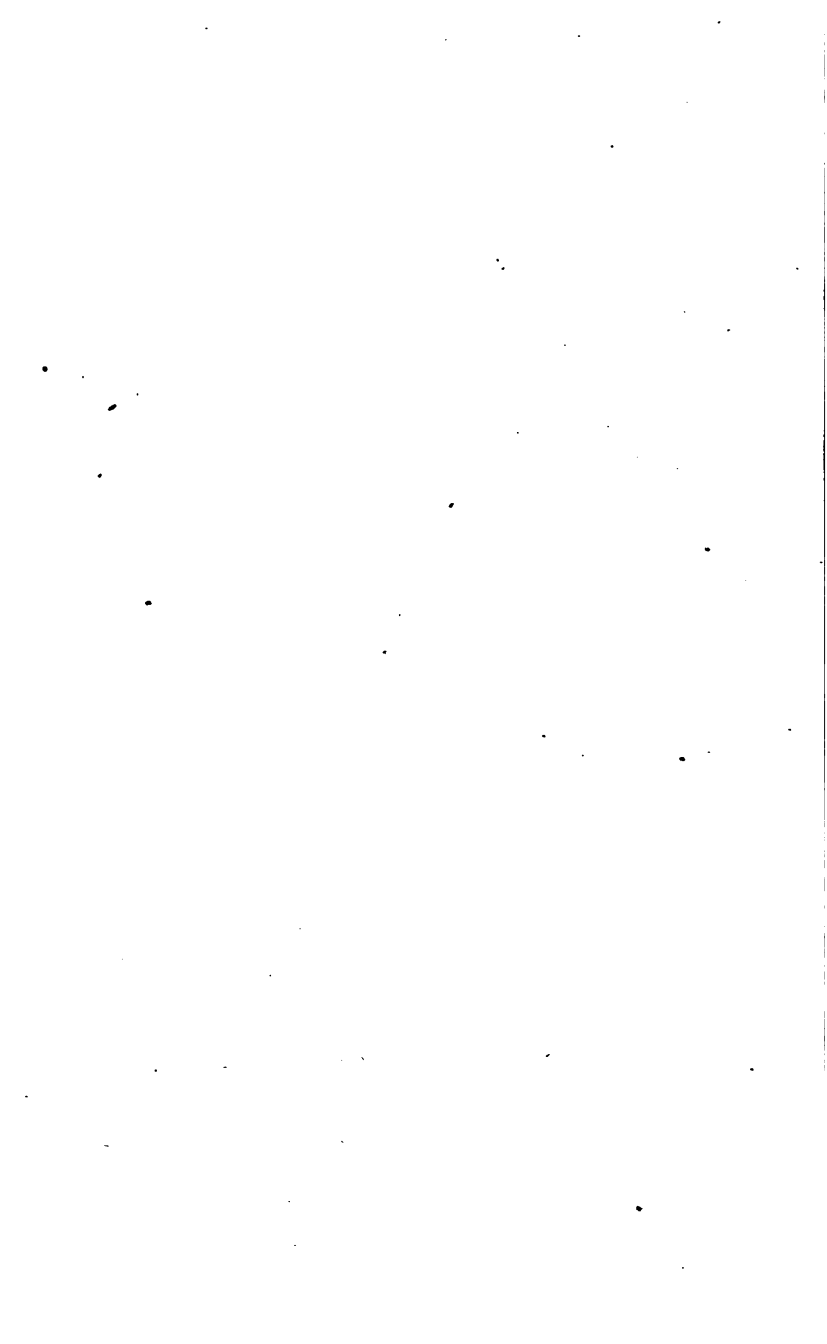
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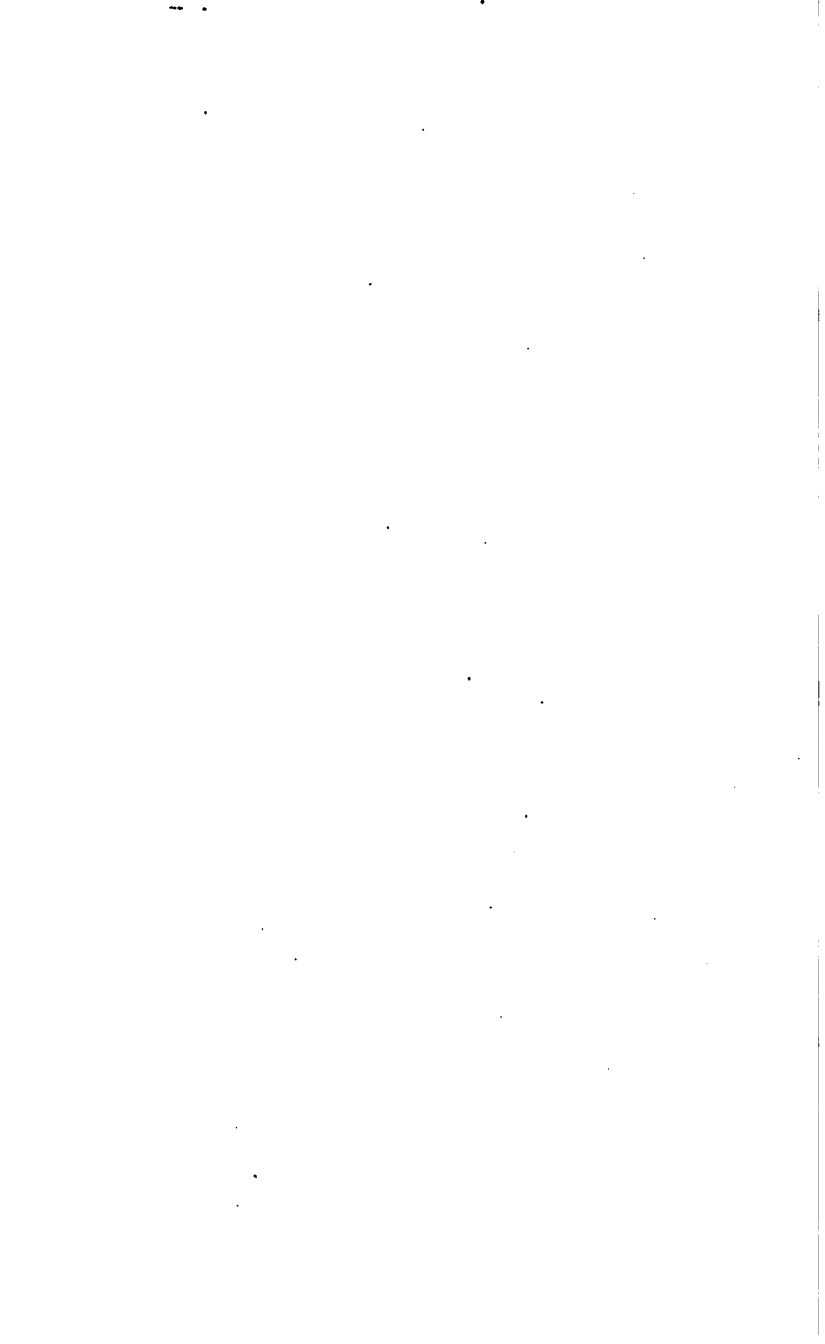
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